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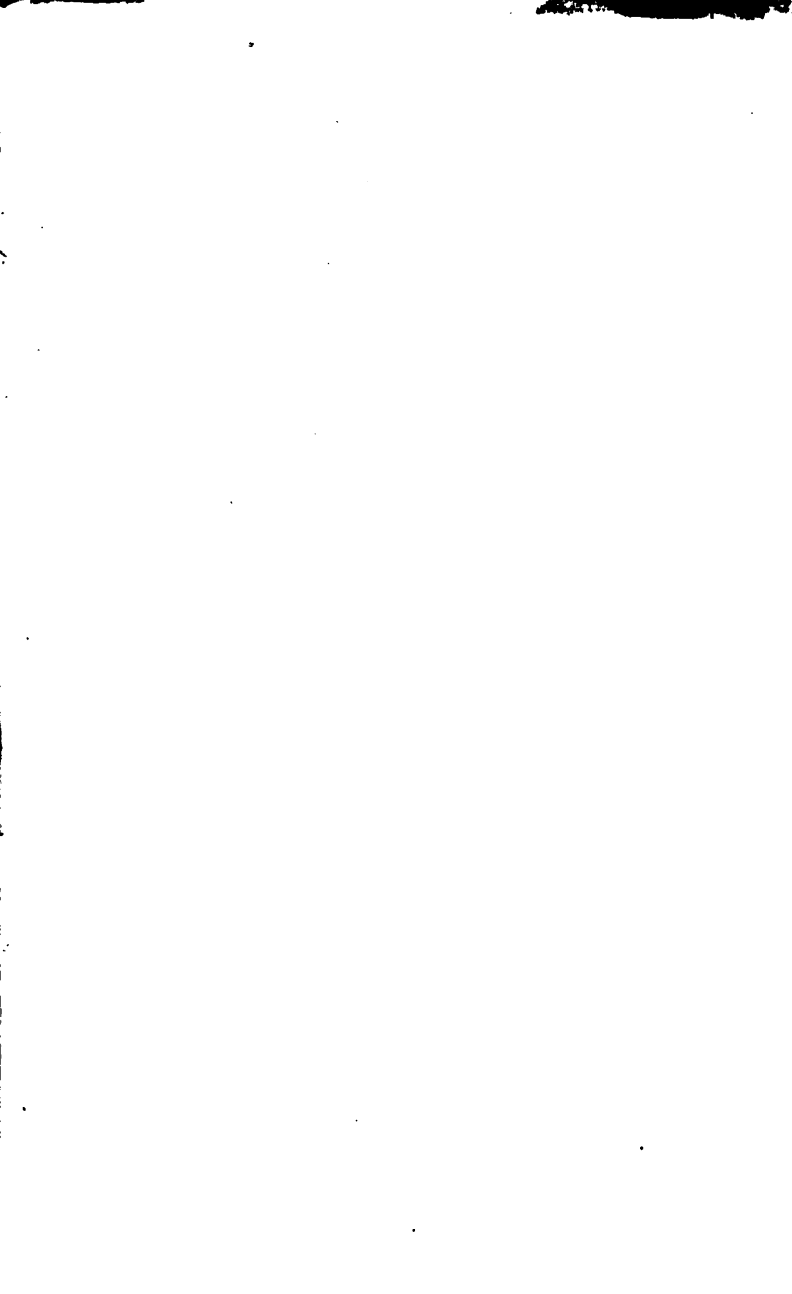
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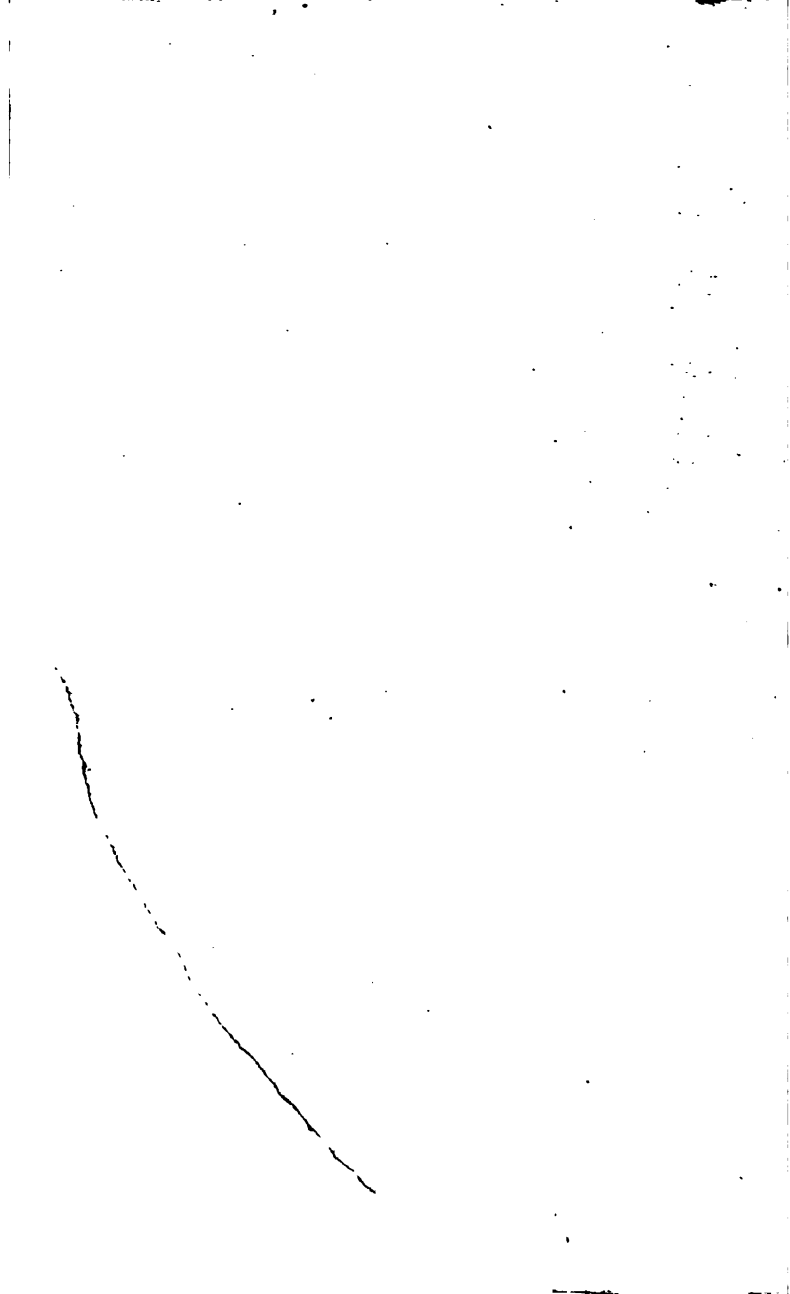
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ROMANCE

AND

REALITY.

BY

L. E. L.

AUTHOR OF

"THE IMPROVISATRICE," "THE VENETIAN BRACELET,"

&c. &c. &c.



Thus have I begun;
And 'tis my hope to end successfully.

SHAKESPEARE.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN AND RICHARD BENTLEY,
NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

1831.



PREFACE.

ROUSSEAU says, nobody reads prefaces. I suspect there is more truth in the assertion than one is quite willing to admit ; for a preface is a species of literary luxury, where an author, like a lover, is privileged to be egotistical ; and really it is very pleasant to dwell upon our own thoughts, hopes, fears, and feelings. But all this is laying a very “ flattering unction to our souls ;” for who really enters into our thoughts, cares for our hopes, allows for our fears, or sympathises with our feelings ? The gratitude and the modesty of an author are equally thrown away. Our readers only open our pages for amusement : if they find it, well and good—if not, our most eloquent pleading will not make them read on. The term “ courteous reader” is as much

PREFACE.

a misnomer as any of the grandiloquent titles of the Great Mogul, Emperor of the World—which means a league round Delhi.

Prefaces want reform quite as much as Parliament: so I beg to retrench the gratitude, modesty, &c. usual on such occasions. Piron used to observe, that the introductory speeches made when a member was elected to the French Institute, were quite superfluous, and that the new Academician needed only to say, “*Messieurs, grand merci ;*” while the Directeur should answer, “*Il n’y a pas de quoi.*” I am sure that when the author begins his “*grand merci*” to the public, that public may very well reply, “*Il n’y a pas de quoi.*”

NOTE.

MISFORTUNES will happen in the best-regulated families ; and, in despite of the world of pains bestowed on the correction of the following pages, one mistake occurs, and for which I cannot have the consolation of blaming any one but myself. It would be a great comfort if I could conscientiously put it as an erratum ; but it is, as the young lady once thought her lover, “ mine and mine only.” Lord Etheringham is called at first Reginald, and afterwards Algernon. The truth is, I could not decide what to call him, and altered his appellation some dozen times. This mistake, however, occurs no where but in the early scenes of the first volume, and will, I trust, be pardoned. Only a modern author can know the plague of names. I have read the Peerage through twice, and actually became interested in the divisions of the House, to see if there was “ a pretty name ” in either majority or minority. But for the great care of “ the readers ” connected with the press through which these pages have passed, both heroine and hero would have undergone that peculiarly English reproach of “ being called out of their

NOTE.

name" in almost every chapter. I do not go quite so far as the lively American writer, who, in the amusing tale of the "Cacoëthes Scribendi," encourages her whole family to write, by the assurance that "the printers would find them grammar and spelling;" but I do gratefully confess my obligations have been many to mine. The long sentences made short, the obscure made plain, the favourite words that would, like "Monsieur Tonson, come again," the duplicate quotations, — for the amendment of all these, I beg to make at once my acknowledgments and my thanks.

ROMANCE AND REALITY.

CHAPTER I.

“ It was an ancient venerable hall.”—CRABBE.

“ This is she,

Our consecrated Emily.”—WORDSWORTH.

SUCH a room as must be at least a century's remove from London, large, white, and wainscoted; six narrow windows, red curtains most ample in their dimensions, an Indian screen, a present in which expectation had found “ ample space and verge enough” to erect theories of their cousin the nabob's rich legacies, ending, however, as many such expectations do, in a foolish marriage and a large family; a dry-rubbed floor, only to have been stepped in the days of hoops and handings; and some dozen of large chairs covered with elaborate tracery, each chair cover the business of a life spent

in satin-stitch. On the walls were divers whole-length portraits, most pastoral-looking grand-mammas, when a broad green sash, a small straw hat, whose size the very babies of our time would disdain, a nosegay somewhat larger than life, a lamb tied with pink riband, concocted a shepherdess just stepped out of an eclogue into a picture. Grandpapas by their side, one hand, or rather three fingers, in the bosom of each flowered waistcoat, the small three-cornered hat under each arm; two sedate-looking personages in gowns and wigs, and one—the fine gentleman of the family—in a cream-coloured coat, extending a rose for the benefit of the company in general. Over the chimney-piece was a glass, in a most intricate frame of cut crystal within the gilt one, which gave you the advantage of seeing your face in square, round, oblong, triangular, or all shapes but its natural one. On each side the fireplace was an arm chair; and in them sat, first, Mr. Arundel, reading the county newspaper as if he had been solving a problem; and, secondly, his lady dozing very comfortably over her knitting; while the centre of the rug was occupied by two white cats,—one worked in worsted, and surrounded by a wreath of roses

—the other asleep, with a blue riband round her neck ; and all as still and quiet as the Princess Nonchalante—who, during her lover's most earnest supplication, only begged he would not hurry himself—could have wished.

The quiet was not very lasting, for the fire was stirred somewhat suddenly, the chairs pushed aside somewhat hastily, the cat disturbed, but without any visible notice from either reader or sleeper. “ My aunt asleep—my uncle as bad ! ” exclaimed Emily Arundel, emerging from the corner where she had been indulging in one of those moods which may be called melancholy or sullen, out of temper or out of spirits, accordingly as they are spoken of in the first or second person ; and Emily was young, pretty, and spoilt enough to consider herself privileged to indulge in any or all of them.

The course of life is like the child's game —“ here we go round by the rule of contrary ” —and youth, above all others, is the season of united opposites, with all its freshness and buoyancy. At no period of our existence is depression of the spirits more common or more painful. As we advance in life our duties become defined ; we act more from necessity and

less from impulse; custom takes the place of energy, and feelings, no longer powerfully excited, are proportionably quiet in reaction. But youth, balancing itself upon hope, is for ever in extremes; its expectations are continually aroused only to be baffled; and disappointment, like a summer shower, is violent in proportion to its brevity.

Young she was—but nineteen, that pleasantest of ages, just past the blushing, bridling, bewildering coming out, when a courtesy and a compliment are equally embarrassing; when one half the evening is spent in thinking what to do and say, and the other half in repenting what has been said and done. Pretty she was—very pretty: a profusion of dark, dancing ringlets, that caught the sun-beams and then kept them prisoners; beautiful dark-gray eyes with large black pupils, very mirrors of her meaning; that long curled eye-lash, which gives a softness nothing else can give; features small, but Grecian in their regularity; a slight delicate figure, an ~~ankle~~ fit for a fairy, a hand fit for a duchess,—no marvel Emily was the reigning beauty of the county. Sprung from one of its oldest families, its heiress too, the idol of her uncle and aunt, who had brought

her up from infancy; accustomed to be made much of, that most captivating kind of flattery,—it may be pardoned if her own estimate was a very pleasant one. Indeed, with the exception of young gentlemen she had refused, and young ladies she had rivalled, Emily was universally liked: kind, enthusiastic, warm, and affectionate, her good qualities were of a popular kind; and her faults—a temper too hasty, a vanity too cultivated—were kept pretty well in the background by the interest or affection, by the politeness or kindness, of her usual circle. To conclude, she was very much like other young ladies, excepting that she had neither lover nor confidante: a little romance, a little pride, and not a little good taste, had prevented the first, so that the last was not altogether indispensable.

Her father had been the youngest brother, and, like many other younger brothers, both unnecessary and imprudent; a captain in a dragoon regiment, who spent his allowance on his person, and his pay on his horse. He was the last man in the world who ought to have fallen in love, excepting with an heiress, yet he married suddenly and secretly the pretty and portionless Emily Delawarr, and wrote home

to ask pardon and cash. The former was withheld on account of the latter, till his elder brother's unexceptionable marriage with Miss Belgrave, and her estate, gave him an interest in the family which he forthwith exerted in favour of Captain Arundel. But a few short years, and the young officer died in battle, and his widow only survived to place their orphan girl in Mr. and Mrs. Arundel's care, to whom Emily had ever been even as their own.

Mr. Arundel was a favourable specimen of the old school, when courtesy, though stately, was kind, and, though elaborate, yet of costly *matériel*; a well-read, though not a literary man—every body did not write in his day—generous to excess; and if proud, his consciousness of gentlemanlike descent was but shewn in his strictness of gentlemanlike feelings. The last of a very old family, an indolent, perhaps an over-sensitive temper—often closely allied—had kept him a quiet dweller on his own lands; and though, from increasing expenses without increasing funds, many an old manor and ancient wood had developed those aerial propensities which modern times have shewn to be inherent in their nature, and had made themselves wings and flown away, yet enough re-

mained for dignity, and more than enough for comfort : and in a county where people had large families, Emily was an heiress of considerable pretension.

His lady was one of those thousand-and-one women who wore dark silk dresses and lace caps—who, after a fashion of their own, have made most exemplary wives ; that is to say, they took to duties instead of accomplishments, and gave up music when they married—who spent the mornings in the housekeeper's room, and the evenings at the tea-table, waiting for the guests who came not—who rose after the first glass of wine—whose bills and calls were paid punctually, and whose dinners were a credit to them. In addition to this, she always knitted Mr. A.'s worsted stockings with her own hands, was good-natured, had a whole book of receipts, and loved her husband and niece as parts of herself.

Few families practised more punctuality and propriety, and perhaps in few could more happiness, or rather content, be found. Occasionally, Mr. Arundel's temper might be ruffled by pheasants and poachers, and his wife's by some ill-dressed dish ; but then there were the quarter sessions to talk of, and other and faultless

dinners to redeem aught of failure in the last. Sometimes Emily might think it was rather dull, and lay down the Morning Post with a sigh, or close her novel with a hope; but in general her spirits were buoyant as her steps, and the darling of the household was also its life and delight. But to-night, the third rainy evening of three rainy days, every flower in the divers china bowls, cups, vases, was withered; the harp was out of tune with the damp; and Emily betook herself to the leafy labyrinth of a muslin flounce, *la belle alliance* of uselessness and industry.

CHAPTER II.

“ And haunted to our very age
With the vain shadow of the past.”—*Mazeppa*.

“ Who knocks so late,
And knocks so loud at our convent gate ?”—*SCOTT*.

BUT one rosebud and half a leaf of the flounce were finished, when it was hastily restored to the work-box, the ringlets involuntarily smoothed back, both uncle and aunt awakened, for a carriage had driven rapidly into the court; a loud ring at the gates, and a loud barking of the dogs, had announced an arrival. In less than two minutes Mr. Delawarr had entered the room, and been installed in a seat near the fire; Mrs. Arundel had vanished; and her husband had called up his best manner, his kindest, to welcome one who, though an old friend, had been mostly recalled to his memory by the newspaper. The visitor was as gracefully as briefly rather accounting than apologising for his sudden intrusion, by saying that an acci-

dent to his carriage had made him late, and turned him from the direct road; and that, though a sportsman no longer, he could not be so near without coming to see if his old instructor in the game laws had quite forgotten the feats of other days. Now this was both *vrai* and *vraisemblable* enough; for, to do Mr. Delawarr justice, if there had been mention made of the declining health of the member for Avonsford, and of his friend's influence in that town, at whose entrance stood the ancient family house, it only gave inclination a motive, or rather an excuse for indulgence.

Very different was the impression produced on all the party. Mr. Arundel could not conceal his surprise, or rather emotion, to see in the pale, mind-worn brow—the elegant but indolent movements of the man of forty, so little trace remaining of the bright-eyed and bright-haired, the lively and impetuous favourite of nineteen; still less in the worldly, half-studied, half-sarcastic tone of his conversation, did any thing recall the romance, the early enthusiasm, which once rendered the interest he inspired one of anxiety. But Mr. Arundel forgot that the most sparkling wines soonest lose that sparkle. The impetuosity of youth becomes

energy in manhood, and Mr. Delawarr's stormy political career was one to call forth every talent: circumstances form the character, but, like petrifying waters, they harden while they form.

To Mrs. Arundel he was the same as any other guest—one who was to eat, drink, and sleep in her house; all her hopes, fears, “an undistinguishable throng,” rested with her cook and housemaid.

Emily had at first shrunk back, in that intuitive awe which all little people at least must have experienced—the feeling which fixes the eye and chains the lip, on finding ourselves for the first time in the presence of some great man, hitherto to us as an historical portrait, one whose thoughts are of the destinies of nations, whose part seems in the annals of England, and not in its society. If such there be, who can come in contact with a being like this without drawing the breath more quickly and quietly, they have only less excitability than we have; and for them *tant pis* or *tant mieux*, according to that golden rule of judgment, as it turns out. This, however, wore off; the attention of a superior is too flattering to our vanity not to call it forth, and Emily soon

found herself talking, smiling, and singing her very best: not that Mr. Delawarr was, generally speaking, at all like the knights of old, *voués aux dames*. Married metaphorically to his place in the ministry, and actually to the daughter of Lord Etheringhame; too worldly to be interested, too busy to be amused; young ladies were very much to him what inhabitants in a borough without votes are—non-entities in creation. But sentiment, like salt, is so universal an ingredient in our composition, that even Mr. Delawarr, years and years ago, had looked at a rainbow to dream of a cheek, had gathered violets with the dew on them, and thought them less bright than the eyes to which they were offerings, had rhymed to one beloved name, and had felt one fair cousin to be the fairest of created things. That cousin was Emily's mother, and her great likeness to her called up a host of early fancies and feelings, over which he scarcely knew whether to sigh or smile. He might smile to think how the lover had wasted his time, and yet sigh to think how pleasantly it had been wasted. But Mr. Delawarr knew well,

“ 'Tis folly to dream of a bower of green,
When there is not a leaf on the tree ;”

and, turning from the past to the present, a little judicious appreciation of his host's claret and conversation obtained, before they parted for the night, more than a hint that Mr. Arundel's influence in the borough was at the disposal of the man who so well understood his country's true interests. Still, Emily was not forgotten; and the next morning she looked so like her mother while pouring the cream into his coffee, that the invitation he gave her to visit Lady Alicia in London was as sincere as it was cordially expressed. And when they gathered, with old-fashioned courtesy, on the stone steps of the ancient hall, to give their parting greeting, as the carriage drove off with true English haste, never did man leave his character more safely behind him. Mr. Arundel went to read a pamphlet on the corn laws with double-distilled admiration, after his own conviction had been strengthened by that of one of his majesty's ministers; Emily went to her favourite lime-walk, to wonder what Lady Alicia was like, to dream of the delights of a "London season," to admire Mr. Delawarr's manner,—in short, he need only not have been a politician (the very name was a stumbling-block to a young lady's romance), and he would have been erect-

ed into a hero fit for a modern novel, a destiny not exactly what he anticipated. Mrs. Arundel was as thoroughly satisfied as either, perhaps more so, for she was satisfied with herself—a supper, sleeping, and breakfast, got through without a blunder; so to her housekeeper she went “in her glory.”

CHAPTER III.

“ Two springs I saw.”—MOORE.

- “ Good night—how can such night be good ?”—SHELLEY.

“ Night, oh, not night : where are its comrades twain—
silence and sleep ?”—L. E. L.

SNOW-DROPPED, crocused, and violeted Spring, in the country, was beginning to consider about making her will, and leaving her legacies of full-blown flowers and green fruit to Summer, when a letter from town arrived, franked by Montague Delawarr, M.P., saying, that as the spring was now commencing in town, perhaps Miss Arundel would remember a hope she once gave, and comply with the request contained in the note which the said Mr. Delawarr had the honour of enclosing.

The note expressed the usual number of fears, honours, and pleasures, which usually accompany invitations ; was written in a hand of even more than usually elegant unintelligible expansiveness ; was on pale sea-green paper,

sealed with lilac wax; and came from Lady Alicia. Now this was a most disinterested act; for the member had recovered, and taken that step of all others which insures existence, purchased a life annuity; and it is a well-known fact in physiology, that annuitants and old women never die. But Mr. Delawarr had taken an interest in his young relative; he knew his house was one of the most elegant, his wife one of the best-dressed women in London, and that she never spent an evening at home,—could he do more for Emily than open such a vista of fêtes and fashions to her futurity?

If any of the party at Arundel House hesitated about the invitation's affirmative, it was herself. Her aunt had a great notion of giving young people as much pleasure as possible, for they would have no time for it after they were married; and her uncle, kind and affectionate, only thought of his favourite's enjoyment, perhaps her advantage. Like many men of quiet manners, and still quieter habits, his imagination was active in the extreme, and had been but little put out of its way by either worldly exertions or disappointments. Thus, before his first egg was finished, Emily had refused three baronets, looked coldly on a viscount,

had two earls at her feet ; and, if the object of this reverie had not destroyed her own good fortune by speaking, she was in a fair way of becoming a duchess.

But, though to Emily London was as much an El Dorado as novels and novelty could make it ; yet if her first exclamation was delight, her second was, " But, my dear uncle, you will miss me so ;" and a long array of solitary walks and lonely rides rose almost reproachfully to her mind. This, however, the uncle would not admit ; and youth, if not selfish, is at least thoughtless ; so a few minutes saw Emily bounding up stairs, with spirits even lighter than her steps, to answer the important billet, which she had already conned over till she could have repeated it from the " Dear Miss Arundel" at the beginning, to the " Alicia C. F. G. Delawarr" of the signature. Many a sheet of paper was thrown aside in various stages, from two to ten lines—twice was the ink changed, and twenty times the pen, before a note worthy of either writer or reader could be effected : but time and the post wait for no man, and necessity was in this case, as in most others, the mother of invention.

The next week passed, as such weeks always

do, in doing nothing, because so much is to be done—in packing and unpacking, till the Labyrinth of Crete was nothing to that of trunks; in farewell calls, in lingering walks, in careful commendations to the gardener of divers pet roses, carnations, &c.; and more than three parts of the time at her unclè's side, who every now and then began giving good advice, which always ended in affectionate wishes.

The morning of her departure arrived—cold, rainy, miserable, but very much in unison with Emily's feelings. A great change in life is like a cold bath in winter—we all hesitate at the first plunge. Affection is more matter of habit than sentiment, more so than we like to admit; and she was leaving both habits and affections behind. There were the servants gathered in the hall, with proper farewell faces; her aunt, hitherto busy in seeing the carriage duly crammed with sandwiches and sweetmeats, having nothing more to do, began to weep. A white handkerchief is a signal of distress always answered; and when Mr. Arundel took his place beside his niece, he had nothing but the vague and usual consolation of "Love, pray don't cry so," to offer for the first stage.

But the day and Emily's face cleared up at

last; her uncle was still with her, the post-boys drove with exhilarating rapidity, and night found them seated by a cheerful fire, with a good supper and better appetite. The morning came again, and Mr. Arundel was now to leave his niece.

“O pleasure! you’re indeed a pleasant thing;”

and our heroine was setting off in pursuit of it, as miserable as any young lady need be. The last sight of the panels of the old yellow coach was the signal for another burst of tears, which extended to three stages to-day, and perhaps would have reached to a fourth, had she not been roused to anger by her maid’s laughter, whose gravity, though most exemplary in the outset, now gave way to the mirth excited by the rapidity with which a ponderous-looking person, outside a stage-coach, had lost hat, umbrella, and bundle, while the vehicle rolled rapidly over them. There is something very amusing in the misfortunes of others. However,—to borrow an established phrase from those worthy little volumes, entitled, the Clergyman’s, Officer’s, and Merchant’s Widows, when the disconsolate relict is recalled from weeping over the dear departed,

by the paramount necessity of getting one of her fourteen children into the Blue-coat School, —“ the exertion did her good ;” and she was soon sufficiently amused to regret when the darkness shut out all view save the post-boy.

Adventures never happen now-a-days ; there are neither knights nor highwaymen ; no lonely heaths, with gibbets for finger-posts ; no hope of even a dangerous rut, or a steep hill ; romance and roads are alike macadamised ; no young ladies are either run away with, or run over ;— and Emily arrived in inglorious safety among the argand lamps and rosewood tables in Mr. Delawarr’s drawing-room—was properly welcomed—introduced—took a hasty dinner, for her host was hurrying to the House, and her hostess to the Opera—was supposed to be very much fatigued—installed into a very pretty little boudoir—and found herself in a seat by the fire, tired enough for an arm-chair, but much too excited for her pillow ; and she leaned back in that most soothing state of indolence, fireside’s fantasies—while her uncle’s wig, Lady Alicia’s black velvet hat, Mr. Delawarr’s kindness, &c. &c. floated down the “ river of her thoughts.” But the three hours before, of, and after midnight in a fashionable square, are not

very favourable to a reverie, when the ear has only been accustomed to the quiet midnights of the country—where the quiet is rather echoed than broken by the wind wandering among boughs of the oak and beach, and whose every leaf is a note of viewless and mysterious music. But in London, where from door to door “leaps the live thunder;” the distant roll of wheels, the nearer dash of carriages, the human voices mingling, as if Babel were still building—these soon awakened Emily’s attention—even the fire had less attraction than the window; and below was a scene, whose only fault is, we are so used to it.

In the middle of the square was the garden, whose sweep of turf was silvered with moonlight; around were the dark shining laurels, and all the pale varieties of colour that flower and shrub wear at such a time, and girdled in by the line of large clear lamps, the spirits of the place. At least every second house was lighted up, and that most visible, the corner one, was illuminated like a palace with the rich stream of radiance that flowed through the crimson blinds; ever and anon a burst of music rose upon the air, and was lost again in a fresh arrival of carriages; then the car-

riages themselves, with their small bright lights flitting over the shadowy foot passengers, — the whole square was left to the care of the gas and the watchman, before Emily remembered that she had next day to do justice to her country roses.

CHAPTER IV.

“ Past twelve o'clock, and a cloudy morning.”

The Watchman.

“ Her elegant and accomplished ladyship.”

Morning Post.

EMILY just rose an hour too soon the next morning—morning, that breaker of spells and sleep. There was the garden dingy and dusty, the green trees with a yellow fever, and the flowering shrubs drooping as if they had been crossed in love of the fresh air. The milkman was, jailor-like, going his clanking rounds ; and, instead of gay equipages waiting for the graceful figures that passed over the steps lightly as their blonde,—now stood a pail, a mop, and a slipshod domestic, whose arms, at least, said much for the carnations of London. Around, like the rival houses of York and Lancaster, some white, some red, stood mansions whose nobility was certainly not of outward show, and setting forth every variety of architecture save

its own peculiar beauty, uniformity; and windows on which "the dust of ages" had gathered, and even that only dimly seen through smoke and fog—those advantages of early rising in London. The sun, the nurserymaids, and children, had all come out before Emily was summoned to the breakfast-table, where a French *soubrette*—who made, as only her nation can do, a pretty face out of nothing, with an apron whose pockets were placed *à l'envie*, and a cap put on *à faire mourir*—was pouring out coffee for the very fair, very languid, and very lady-like Lady Alicia, who, enveloped in a large shawl, was almost lost in that and the pillowed arm-chair.

Few women, indeed, think, but most feel; now Lady Alicia did neither: nature had made her weak and indolent, and she had never been placed in circumstances either to create or call forth character. As an infant she had the richest of worked robes, and the finest of lace caps; the nurse was in due time succeeded by the nursery governess, whose situation was soon filled by the most accomplished person the united efforts of fourteen countesses could discover. Pianos, harps, colour-boxes, collars, French, Italian, &c. &c. duly filled the school-

room : but for music Lady Alicia had no ear, for dancing no liking, for drawing no taste ; and French and Italian were, it must be owned, somewhat unnecessary to one who considered her own language an unnecessary fatigue. At eighteen she came out, beautiful she certainly was ; highly accomplished — for Lady F., her mother's intimate friend, had several times confidentially mentioned the names of her masters ; while Lady C. had expressed her approbation of the reserved dignity which led the daughter of one of our oldest families to shun that display which might gratify her vanity, but wounded her pride.

All was prepared for a ducal coronet at least ; when the very day after her presentation, her father went out of town, and the ministry together ; and three long useless years were wasted in the stately seclusion of Etheringbame Castle ; where the mornings in summer were spent at a small table by the window, and in winter by the fire, putting in practice the only accomplishment that remained—like a ghost of the past—cutting out figures and landscapes in white paper, whose cold, colourless regularity were too much in sympathy with herself for her not to excel in the art. The middle of the day

was devoted to a drive, if fair, — if wet, to wondering whether it would clear. Dressing came next, — a mere mechanical adjustment of certain rich silks and handsome jewels, where vanity was as much out of the question, as if its own peculiar domain had not been a looking-glass: with no one to attract, and, still dearer hope, no one to surpass, *cui bono?* for, after all, vanity is like those chemical essences whose only existence is when called into being by the action of some opposite influence.

During dinner the Earl lamented the inevitable ruin to which the country was hastening; and, after grace had been said, the Countess agreed with him, moreover observing, that dress alone was destroying the distinction of ranks, and that at church silks were commoner than stuffs. Here the conversation ceased, and they returned to the drawing-room; the Countess to sleep — Lady Alicia to cut out more paper landscapes.

Twice a-year there was a great dinner, to which she was regularly handed down by the old Marquess of Snowdon, who duly impressed upon her mind how very cold it was; and, in truth, he looked like an embodied shiver.

At one and twenty an important change took place. Lady Alicia was summoned from a little paper poodle, on whose white curls she had been bestowing peculiar pains, by the drawing-room doors being thrown open with even more than their usual solemnity, and she was informed, by his own man, that his lordship requested her presence in the library: the surprise was sufficiently great to make her cut off her little dog's tail.

The ex-minister was too important a person to be kept waiting, at least in his own family; what he now wanted in quantity of authority, he made up in quality. She descended into the large Gothic room dedicated to the learning of past ages, and the dignity of the present; a large round table stood in the middle, covered with political pamphlets, cut open, at least, most carefully, and a newspaper lying on a folio volume of Bolingbroke's. In a large arm-chair, with the Peerage in one hand, and an open letter in the other, whose seal, though broken, still shewed the crimson glory of the coat of arms, sat Lord Etheringhame; and on the other side, in a chair equally erect, and in her person still more so, was the lady mother. What circumstance could have occasioned such

a change in the castle's domestic economy—a matrimonial *tête-à-tête* at such unusual hours, and in such an unusual place? What but a circumstance that has authorised many extraordinary proceedings—an offer of marriage. Lady Alicia took the seat assigned her by a wave of his lordship's hand.

“The consequence of our family,” said her father.

“The advantages of such a union,” observed the mother.

“The solitude to which my philosophical and literary pursuits—” here the retired statesman paused.

“Well aware of the excellent principles instilled into your mind,” exclaimed mamma.

“Connected with some of the first people in the kingdom,” ejaculated papa.

“Fastidious as my daughter must be,” and Lady Etheringhame drew up *à la giraffe*.

“So desirable a political connexion,” and his lordship looked at his daughter and his pamphlets.

“I shall be freed from the weight of so much maternal anxiety;” but her ladyship was stopped in her parental display by the positive declaration of—

"And now, Alicia, shall I write an answer as affirmative as suits the dignity of our house?"

Alicia said nothing and looked less.

"We will spare her confusion," said the Countess.

"You may retire," said the Earl.

Lady Alicia was as much bewildered as it was in her nature to be; but she made up her mind to ask her mother what they wanted with her in the library, and seated herself to cut out another little poodle.

The dinner-bell rang, and Lady Etheringhame entered.

"Alicia, my love, wear your turquoise set to-day: of course, I should wish you to appear to advantage on Mr. Delawarr's first visit."

It was as if all the astonishment of her life was to be crowded into one day; for on retiring to her toilette, her handmaiden, the very reverse of her mistress, extremes meet (*vide* Lara and Jaqueline), by dint of compliments and insinuations, succeeded at length in drawing from her something like a question; and with all her father's eloquence and mother's anxiety, Alicia only now began to suspect a husband in the case, and that the library audi-

ence and the turquoises referred to Mr. Delawarr.

Delawarr Hall was the nearest seat to Etheringham Castle, and the families had for years run through every possible variety of opposition and alliance. Between the present proprietors there had existed rather civility than cordiality. Lord Etheringham's opinions were as hereditary as his halls; innovation was moral rebellion; the change of a fashion, a symptom of degeneracy; he would as soon have destroyed his pedigree as his pigtail; and looked on every new patent, whether for a peerage or a pie-dish, as another step to ruin; in short, he held just the reverse of the poet's opinion—with him, not whatever is, but whatever had been, was right.

Sir Walter, on the contrary, was a man of plans and projects: he refurnished his house, and talked of the march of intellect; cut down a plantation of old oaks in search of a lead mine; put in French windows instead of Gothic, on which his mother died of cold, or grief; married his first wife for fancy, and talked of sentiment; his second for money, and talked of liberality, and deprecated vain pride of birth; he lost money by taking shares in a canal,

which to have made profitable must have cut just across his own park ; subscribed to a book society, and was eloquent about encouraging genius ; had a newly invented stove in his hall ; and novelty to him was what antiquity was to the other—each, like charity, covered a multitude of sins. But, above all, Sir Walter's great pride was his son, who, already far beyond his competitors, gave assurance of the distinguished career he ran in after-life. Two things were at this period necessary for Montague Delaware,—to get married, and returned for the county.

The Baronet's dressing-room had a view of the castle. No wonder that Lady Alicia suggested herself to his mind. Montague was now in the country ; and if St. Valentine could aid St. Stephen, why married he intended to be, some time or other ; so the letter of proposal was written, and the result had been as favourable as they could wish.

Seven o'clock came, and with it Sir Walter and his son. The dinner-bell to-day was indeed to be "the tocsin of the heart." With something more like emotion than she had ever felt in her life before, Lady Alicia Lorraine made her appearance, and a very fair appearance it was ;

both figure and face were fine, her dress elegant, and the turquoises so becoming, that when Montague took his seat by her at table, he began to think the wife herself was something in the matrimonial contract about to be made. The delusion, by a little maternal arrangement, hints of timidity, &c., lasted very respectably till after the wedding, when, with as little blushing and as much blonde as possible, the name of Lorraine was changed for that of Delawarr. They were the happiest couple spoken of. Sir Walter had presented his late wife's emeralds, and his son had them reset; the bride's beauty quite inspired Sir Thomas Lawrence; and Mr. Delawarr was returned for the county.

In the midst of a brilliant public career, he had little time to discover whether his household divinity was very like those of old—a statue. Lady Alicia was good-natured—that good nature which is composed of a soft smile, a low voice, indulgence of every kind—self among the number: for the rest, if her mind had a feature, it was indolence; and her cashmere, character, and carriage, were alike irreproachable.

Such was the lady with whom Emily had to encounter the dangers of a *tête-à-tête*. It

passed off better than she hoped. Lady Alicia liked to be amused, and her young companion was soon encouraged to be amusing. Their arrangements were speedily made; they were to dine with Lady Etheringham; his lordship's magnificent funeral had filled a column in the paper three years before; the dowager took to study her health, and lived in town to be near her physicians—and with a little illness and a great deal of complaint, managed to live on. The morning was to be devoted to milliners, shopping, &c.; both went to prepare for the drive; Lady Alicia convinced that Miss Arundel was a very charming girl, and Miss Arundel wondering if fairy tales were true, and whether her hostess was a snow woman animated by a spell.

CHAPTER V.

"The bondage of certain ribands and gloves."

• • • • •

"Your gown is a most rare fashion, i' faith."

• • • • •

"These pelican daughters."—SHAKESPEARE.

SHOPPING, true feminine felicity ! how rapidly it passed the morning away—how in a few short hours were Emily's ideas expanded ! Here she blushed for her sleeves, there for her flounces : how common seemed the memory of her red-rose wreath beside her newly acquired taste for golden oats ! The bonnets that were tried on, the silks that were unfolded, the ribands that were chosen,—till she went home happy in a hat, whose dimensions far exceeded the shields of any of her forefathers, and having chosen a ball dress, on whose composition, the milliner assured her, genius had exhausted itself.

Lady Etheringhame being now a constitutionalist, dined rather early : and Emily, her head like a kaleidoscope, full of colours, with not a little disdain, put on the blue silk she

had thought *bleu céleste*, at least in the country. What a march does a woman's intellect, *i. e.* taste, take in the streets of London !

Exactly at five they were at the dowager's door—exactly five minutes after, they were seated in her dining-room ; and Emily began to consider whether she or the wine-coolers were most chilled—whether Lady Etheringham's black satin or herself were stiffest—and whether she weighed her words as she did her food in the little pair of scales by her side. They adjourned to the drawing-room, and sat “ like figures ranged upon a dial-plate.” The French clock on the mantel-piece ticked audibly—Lady Alicia dozed—their hostess detailed symptoms and remedies, and eulogised mustard-seed,—while Emily sat like a good child, playing propriety, and looking the listener at least. Ten o'clock came at last, and with it the carriage.

“ I am afraid, mamma, you are so tired,” said the daughter.

“ How much we give to thoughts and things our tone,
And judge of others' feelings by our own !”

“ I hope Miss Arundel will do me the honour of accompanying you on your next visit?”

A stately bend from the elder—a low “many thanks”—a good night—and the visit was over.

“Is it possible,” thought Emily, “a visit in London could be so dull?”

The next morning was more amusing—visitor after visitor came in; for Lady Alicia, like most indolent people, preferred any one else’s company to her own,—all could entertain her better than she could entertain herself. An elderly gentleman had gone off with a cough, and a lady of no particular age with a prophecy.

“Well, take my word for it, those girls will never marry; marriage is like money—seem to want it, and you never get it.”

The Cassandra was scarcely departed, when the objects of her oracle appeared—Mrs. Fergusson and her two daughters. Nothing could be more correct than the externals of these young ladies—large curls, large sleeves, still larger bonnets, words like the poet’s idea of adieu, or the advice to make good children—“to be seen, not heard,”—and faces indicative of elegant indifference.

Mr. Fergusson had made his fortune, and Mrs. F. now meant to make her way in the world; her society was to be refined and exalted;

she resolved on getting people to her house, and going to people's houses, whose names as yet were all she knew of them; and by dint of patience, perseverance, and pushing, she had to a great degree succeeded. Is not Locke the great philosopher who says, the strokes of the pickaxe build the pyramid? But these social contracts were subservient to one great end—domestic economy. Mrs. Fergusson had a family of six daughters; and to get these well married was the hope and aim of her existence, “the ocean to the river” of her thoughts. By day she laid plans, by night dreamed they had succeeded. To this point tended dresses, dances, dinners; for this she drove in the park—for this waited out the ballet at the opera—for this Mr. St. Leger found his favourite *pâté de cœur des tourterelles* perfect at her table; for this Mr. Herbert, twice a week during last April, was asked to a family dinner—*un dîné sans façons est une perfidie*, though in a different sense to what the poet *des plateaux* intended; for this, on Mr. Hoggart, a Scotchman—who wore a blue coat, which he always began to button when economy was talked of—did mamma impress, what a treasure her Elizabeth was, and how well she supplied her place at home. [By the

by, what an odious thing is a blue coat with brass buttons, shining as if to stare you out of countenance, and reflecting in every button a concave composition, which you recognise as a caricature of yourself. No lady should dance with a man who wears a blue coat and brass buttons.] For Mr. Rosedale did Laura wear vestal white, when every one else was *à la Zamiel*, and a cottage bonnet—a cottage ornée, to be sure—when every other head was in a hat.

Still, two seasons, besides watering places, had passed away fruitlessly; and the Misses Fergussons, of whom two only had yet passed the Rubicon of balls, operas, &c. coming out, were still the fair but unappropriated adjectives of the noun-matrimonial husband; still it was something to be “ready, aye ready,”—the family motto. Of them nothing more can be said, than that Laura was pretty, and enacted the beauty; Elizabeth was plain, and therefore was to be sensible: the one sat at her harp, the other at her work-box.

Now, Mrs. Fergusson thought a visit to Lady Alicia a sad waste of time: there were no sons, no brothers, at least as bad as none—for the Earl was in the country, the younger abroad; still she was too little established in

society for neglect. So, collecting a few facts and fancies, putting on her most fatigued face, she began talking, while the daughters sat such complete personifications of indifference, that Mrs. Granville might very well have addressed her ode to either of them.

“Mrs. De Lisle’s rooms were so crowded last night—very brilliant. Still, alas!”—(here Mrs. Fergusson looked philosophical)—“the weariness of pleasure; but these dear girls were in such requisition, it was nearly day before we left. Conceive my fatigue.”

“Why, then,” said her hearer, very quietly, “did you not leave before?”

“Ah, Lady Alicia, how little do you understand the feelings of a mother! Could I break in upon their young pleasures? Besides”—and here her voice sank to a whisper—“I do own my weakness; yet what maternal heart but must be gratified by such admiration as was excited by my sweet Laura? It is dangerous to a young head; but she is so simple, so unpretending.”

“Very true,” said her ladyship.

Now came one of those audible pauses, the tickings of the death-watch of English conversation. This was broken by Mrs. Fergusson’s

asking a question. How many are asked for want of something to say! The questions of curiosity are few to those of politeness.

"Pray, when do you expect your brother, Mr. Lorraine, in England?"

"Ah, Edward! Delawarr told me he was coming at last. He is to stay with us."

Mrs. Fergusson now, for the first time, looked at Emily, who, occupied in considering whether the Misses Fergusson were deaf or dumb, or both, was quite unconscious of the scrutiny.

A marriage and a death concluded the visit.

"Well!" ejaculated Mrs. Fergusson, as soon as the carriage gave security to that flow of soul, entitled confidential conversation, "to think of the luck of some people — there will this Miss Arundel be living in the house with the Hon. Edward Lorraine."

No one knew better than this lady the dangers or advantages of propinquity.

"I hate that odious dark hair, and ringlets too, so affected; but she is not pretty," said Miss Laura.

"There is nothing in her," said Miss Elizabeth, who piqued herself on discrimination of character.

CHAPTER VI.

" I love a devious path that winds askance,
And hate to keep one object still in view ;
The flowers are fragrant that we find by chance—
And in both life and nature I would rather
Have those I meet than those I come to gather."

The Brunswick.

" Ah, 'tis a pleasure that none can tell,
To feel you're the wild wave's master."

" IMPOSSIBLE ! If his highness would but consider"——

" I never considered in my life, and am not going to begin now. I cross the river, if you please, before yon black cloud."

" We must put back — we cannot allow a stranger to perish."

" Gentlemen of the sail, I can assure you it is not my destiny to be drowned ; fulfil your agreement, or forfeit your dollars."

One of the most pertinacious of the boatmen now began to mutter something about a family at once large and small.

" I can endure no more : when a man be-

gins to talk of his wife and family, I consider his designs on my purse and time to be quite desperate. Descendants of the sea-kings! I am sure I shall not drown; and if you do, I promise to increase your donation, till your widows may erect a church and belfry to ring a rejoicing peal over your memory; and thus I end the dispute."

So saying, the young Englishman rose from the deck, where he had lain wrapped in his cloak and his thoughts—and putting the sul-
len steersman aside, took the helm into his own hands. A few moments saw the little vessel gallantly scudding through the waters, dashing before her a shower of foam like sudden snow—and leaving behind a silver track, like a shining serpent, called by some strange spell from its emerald palace, and yet bright with the mysterious light of its birthplace. The river, now like an allied army, swollen with the gathered rains of many weeks, was darkened on one side by an ancient forest, black as night and death, and seeming almost as eternal. It was swept, but not bowed, by a mighty wind, now loud as mountain thunder, and now low with that peculiar whisper which haunts the leaf of the pine—such as might have

suited the oracles of old—an articulate though unknown language,—and ever and anon rushing from its depths till the slight bark was hidden by the driven waters; while overhead hung one dense mass of cloud—a gathered storm, heavy as the woods it overshadowed. The banks on the other side were as those of another world; there arose rocks covered with coloured lichens, or bare and shewing the rainbow-stained granite, and between them small open spaces of long soft grass, filled with yellow flowers; and here and there slight shrubs yielding to the wind, and one or two stately trees which defied it. Still, the tempest was evidently rolling away in the distance; a few large drops of rain seemed to be the melting of the light which was now breaking through its cloudy barrier; already the moon, like the little bark beneath, was visible amid surrounding darkness, and at last illuminated, encouragingly, the deck and its youthful master, whose noble and romantic style of beauty suited well a scene like this.

The excitement of the moment had given even more than its ordinary paleness to his cheek, while its character of determination redeemed, what was almost a fault, the feminine delicacy of his mouth; the moonlight above

was not more spiritual than the depths of his large blue eyes ; and the rain that had washed his hair only gave even more glossiness to the light auburn waves that shadowed a forehead whose flowing line was that of genius and of grace : it was a face and figure to which the mind gave power, and whose slight and delicate proportions had been effeminate but for the strength which is of the spirit.

Successful daring makes its own way ; and when the dangerous bend of the river was passed, and the wind had gradually wailed itself to rest like a passionate child, his boatmen were as elated as if the triumph had been their own. They reached the landing-place, ruled by an old oak, beneath whose shade the sea-kings must have stood : the crew went on to the little village, whose houses were already those of promise ; while Edward loitered after, languid with the luxury of exertion, and the softness of the now lulled and lovely night. The moon was yet very young—that clear diamond crescent which looks as if undimmed by the sorrows, or unsullied by the crimes, which will fill even the brief period of her reign over earth : but there was ample light to shew his way across a vast field, where every step he took filled the air

with fragrance,—for the ground was covered with those fairy flowers, the lilies of the valley—their ivory bells bowed the slight stalks by thousands, and their snow was like frost-work—as if winter had given her only loveliness to summer.

As he approached the village, the wild cherry-trees surrounded it like an orchard, the boughs covered with crimson profusion, and the cottage where he stopped was crowned with flowers; for here the turf-sods, which form the roof, are the nursery of numberless blossoming plants, all fair, and most of them fragrant. The door opened, a bright hearth was glowing with its wood fire of the odoriferous young pine-branches; and the hostess was quite pretty enough to make the short scarlet petticoat, and red handkerchief which gathered up her profusion of light tresses, seem the most becoming of costumes.

The game had the perfection of wild-heath flavour; and the rich peach brandy was most exhilarating to the wet and weary. After supper they gathered round the hearth. Many a tale was told of wood and water spirit, with all the eloquent earnestness of belief. The national song *Gaule Norgé* was sung, as people

always sing national songs after dinner—with all their heart, and as much voice as they have left ; and Edward Lorraine went to bed, when nothing was wanting but an audience, to have made him declaim most eloquently on the excellence of unsophisticated pleasure.

The next day he rose early to join in the chase of an elk, an animal rarely seen even in that remote part. The band of hunters were young and bold, and there was just enough of danger for excitement. Many a deep valley and dark ravine did they pass, when a loud shout told that their prey was at hand. Fronting them, on a barren and steep height, stood the stately creature, his size thrown out in bold relief by the clear blue sky behind : he tossed his proud antlers defyingly, as if he were conscious of the approaching enemy—when suddenly he turned, and dashed down the opposite side. Their game was now secure ; gradually they narrowed their circle, till they quite hemmed in the little dell where it had taken refuge. Their noiseless steps might have defied even an Indian ear, and a few scattered trees concealed them. The stag was lying amid the grass ; his horns, in forcing a passage through the woods, had borne away their spoil ; and a creeping plant,

with large green leaves and small bright blue flowers, had wound round them, as if the victim were bound with wreaths for sacrifice. Another moment, and the hunters rushed forward ; five spears were in its side at once. Awakened more than injured, the elk sprung up. One incautious youth was thrown on the ground in a moment, while it made for the thicket where Edward was hid.

He had meant to have witnessed rather than have joined in the attack ; but the danger was imminent—his life was on a chance—the shot rang from his pistol—and the next moment he felt the large dark eye of the dying animal fix on his, and it lay in the death agony at his feet, for the bullet had entered its forehead. His comrades gathered round, received the reward he had promised, and prepared for supper in the woods, while Edward stood gazing on the gallant stag.

It was fifteen years since one of the kind had been seen in the district. A few hours and a few dollars finished his brief reign in the woods ; and Lorraine thought a little sadly on the bold and the lonely which had fallen to gratify his curiosity.

Your moralising is, after all, but a zest to

pleasure; and his remorse was more than mitigated by the applause bestowed on his address and presence of mind,—till the horns of the elk came to be viewed with very self-satisfactory feelings. Active pleasures, however, had their day; and Edward soon began to prefer wandering amid the mighty forests, till he half believed in the spirits of which they were the home; or he would lie for hours embedded in some little nook of wild flowers, amid the rocks that looked down on the river—a wild soaring bird the sole interruption to his solitude. But one cannot practise poetry for ever; and he soon found he was declining rapidly from the golden age of innocent pleasure to the silver one of insipidity. So one fine morning saw him bribing his driver, and urging the pretty little brown horses of the country to their utmost speed, on his way to England. The sea-port was gained—the wind as favourable as if that had been bribed too—and in a fortnight he was at Hull, quite as pleased to return to his native land as he had been to leave it.

* This journey to Norway may be considered the specimen brick of Edward Lorraine's life and character; for the season before, he had been

le Prince cheri of the Park and Pall Mall—his dressing-room was one mirror—his sofas pink satin—his taste was as perfect in beauty as it was in perfume—his box at the Opera exhaled every evening a varying atmosphere; it was not the night of *Medea* or *Otello*, but that of the *heliotrope* or the *esprit des violettes*;—he talked of building a rival Regent Street with his invitation cards—and actually took a cottage “all of lilies and roses” at Richmond, as fitting warehouse for his pink and blue notes, “sweets to the sweet,”—and drove even Mr. Delawarr out of his patience and politeness, by asking who was prime minister.

But, alas, for the vanity of human enjoyment! we grow weary of even our own perfection. About July, fashion took a shade of philosophy—friends became weary, we mean wearisome—pleasures stale—pursuits unprofitable—and Lorraine decided on change; he was resolved to be natural, nay, a little picturesque; all that remained was the how, when, and where. He thought of the lakes—but they are given up to new-married couples, poets, and painters; next, of the Highlands—but a steam-boat had profaned Loch Lomond, and pic-nics Ben Nevis: of Greece he had already

had a campaign, in which he had been robbed of every thing, from his slippers to his cimeter—and had returned home, leaving behind his classical enthusiasm, and bringing back with him an ague. He took up the *Gazetteer* in desperation for a *Sortes*, and laid it down delighted and decided : next day he set off for Norway.

In his mind the imagination was as yet the most prominent feature ; it made him impetuous—for the unknown is ever coloured by the most attractive hues ; it made him versatile—for those very hues, from their falsehood, are fleeting, and pass easily from one object to another ; it made him melancholy—for the imagination, which lives on excitement, most powerfully exaggerates the reaction ; but, like a fairy gift, it threw its own nameless charm over all he did—and a touch, as it were, of poetry, spiritualised all the common-places of life. His was a character full of great and glorious elements, but dangerous ; so alive to external impressions, so full of self-deceit—for what deceives us as we deceive ourselves ? To what might not some dazzling dream of honour or of love lead ? It was one that required to be subdued by time, checked by obstacles, and

softened by sorrow; afterwards to be acted upon by some high and sufficient motive to call its energies into action—and then, of such stuff nature makes her noblest and best. As yet his life had, like that of the cuckoo, known

“ No sorrow in its song,
No winter in its year.”

His beauty had charmed even his stately lady-mother into softness; and he was the only being now on earth whom his brother loved. Young, noble, rich, gifted with that indefinable grace which, like the fascination of the serpent, draws all within its circle, but not for such fatal purpose—with a temper almost womanly in its affectionate sweetness—with those bold buoyant spirits that make their own eagle-wings,—what did Edward de Lorraine want in this world but a few difficulties and a little misfortune?

CHAPTER VII.

“ Un bal ! il fallait de grandes toilettes.”

Mémoires sur Josephine.

“ Midnight revels—on their mirth and dance intent,
At once with joy and fear *her* heart rebounds.”

MILTON.

THE boudoir was a very pretty boudoir; the curtains at the window were rich rose colour, the paper a pale pink, and the fire-place like the altar of hope—one sparkling blaze. On the mantel-piece two alabaster figures supported each a little lamp; whose flame was tinted by the stained flowers; some china ornaments, purple and gold, and a vase filled with double violets, were reflected in the mirror. On the one side was a stand of moss roses, on the other a dressing-table, and a glass à la *Psyche*, over whose surface the wax tapers flung a soft light, worthy of any complexion, even had it rivalled the caliph Vathek's pages, whose skins “ were fair as the enamel of Frangistan.” In

short, it was one of those becoming rooms which would put even a grace in additional good humour.—By the by, what a barbarous, what an uncharitable act it is, of some people to furnish their rooms as they do, against all laws of humanity as well as taste! We have actually seen rooms fitted up with sea-green, and an indigo-coloured paper: what complexion could stand it? The most proper of becoming blushes would be utterly wasted, and perhaps at the most critical moment. Mrs. Fergusson never would let her daughters visit at Lady Carysfort's, on account of the unabated crimson of her walls and furniture: as she justly observed, the dancers looked like ghosts. For ourselves, when we furnish our rooms, we have decided on a delicate pink paper; it lights up well, and is such a relief to the foreground of whites, reds, and blue. The hangings, &c., certainly of French rose: windows are favourite seats; and who knows how much may be effected in a *tête-à-tête*, by the crimson shade of the curtain flitting over a fair cheek *à propos*? But we are patriotic people, and write treatises for the Society of Useful Knowledge.

Emily Arundel stood by the dressing-table. The last curl of her dark hair had received its

last braid of pearls; the professor of papillotes had decided, and she quite agreed with him, that *à la Calypso* best suited with her Grecian style of feature. The white satin slip, over which floated the cloud-like gauze, suited well with the extreme delicacy of her figure; and the little snow-slipper would not have disgraced the silver-footed Thetis, or Cinderella herself. The *bouquet de rois* shed its last tears on the cambric *parsemés de lis*—and Emily turned from her glass with that *beau idéal* of all reflections, “I am looking my very best!”

“Really, Emily, you are very pretty,” said Lady Alicia, when she entered the drawing-room. Emily quite agreed with her.

The carriage soon whirled them to Lady Mandeville’s; a proper length of time elapsed before they penetrated the blockade of coaches; a most scientific rap announced their arrival, and Emily’s heart went quicker than the knocker. The old song says,

“My heart with love is beating—”

of pleasure, should be added. But soon admiration was the only active faculty. The noble staircase was lined with the rarest greenhouse plants; she might have gone through a whole

course of botany before they arrived at the drawing-room,—for two quadrilles and three waltzes were played while they stood on the stairs. As they entered, an opening in the figure of the dance gave a transient view of nearly the whole length of the apartments. It was a brilliant *coup d'œil*: mirrors, like the child's nursery-song, “up to the ceiling, and down to the ground,” reflected an almost endless crowd—the graceful figures “in shining draperies enfolded,” the gay wreaths round the heads of the young, the white waves of feathers on their seniors—the silver light from the moon-like lamps flashed back from bright gems and brighter eyes; the rich decorations—alabaster vases, their delicate tracery like the frost-work of winter filled with the flowers of summer—the sweep of the purple curtains—the gold mouldings, and a few beautiful pictures—while all terminated in a splendidly illuminated conservatory.

Emily had plenty of time to “sate herself with gazing,”—for Lady Alicia quietly seated herself on a sofa, and seemed to trust to fate about finding either hostess, or partner for her protégée, who at last began to think the mere spectator of pleasure ought to be a philosopher.

We have heard of the solitude of the wide ocean, of the sandy desert, of the pathless forest; but, for a real, thorough, and entire knowledge, far beyond Zimmerman's, of the pleasures of solitude, commend us to a young damsel doomed to a sofa and female society, while quadrille after quadrille is formed in her sight, and the waltzes go round, like stars with whose motions we have nothing to do.

The crowd was now beginning rapidly to disperse: true, there was more space for the *pas seul*; but fatigue had quenched its spirit—curls shewed symptoms of straightness—the bouquets had lost their freshness, and so had many a cheek. At this moment Lady Mandeville came up; and a shade, the least in the world, on the brow of her young visitor shewed a discontent which, in her heart, she thought such a chaperone as Lady Alicia might well justify. Never was kindness more gracious in its courtesy than her's. "Captain St. Leger, Miss Arundel;" and the next minute Emily prepared smile and step; one at least was thrown away; her partner, strong in the consciousness of coat, curls, and commission, the best of their kind, deemed it risking the peace of the female world unnecessarily



to add other dangers to those so irresistible. During *le Pantalon* he arranged his neckcloth ; *l'Eté*, drew his fingers through his curls ; *la Poule*, he asked if she had been that morning in the Park ; during *la Pastorelle* prepared for his *pas seul* ; and during *la Finale*, recovered the trouble of dancing, gave his arm, and, as the carriage was announced, handed her into it. " A ball is not always the *comble de bonheur*" to papas, says the author of the *Dis-owned* ; " nor to their daughters either," could have added Emily Arundel.

CHAPTER VIII.

"And music too—dear music, which can touch
Beyond all else the soul that loves it much."

MOORE.

"Your destiny is in her hands," ay, utterly : the Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge does not depend more on its encyclopædia, Mr. Brougham—the new tragedy on Macready—the balance of Europe on the Duke—none of these are so utterly dependent as a young lady on her chaperone. She may be a beauty—but the Medicean herself would require announcing as Venus : we all see with other people's eyes, especially in matters of taste. She may be rich—but an heiress, like a joint-stock company, requires to be properly advertised. She may be witty—but *bon-mots* require to be repeated rather than heard for a reputation ; and who is to do this but a chaperone ? —That being of delicate insinuations, of confidential whispers, of research in elder brothers, of exclusiveness in younger ones—she of praises

and partners for her own protégée, of interruptions, ifs, and buts, for others. But, as Ude says of a forcemeat ball, "*il faut un génie pour cela*," and to that Lady Alicia made no pretensions.

Evening after evening Emily stepped into the carriage with all the slowness of discontent, and flung off robe and wreath on her return with all the pettishness of disappointment. In the mean time her uncle was quite edified by her letters: she spoke with such regret of the country, with its simple and innocent pleasures, how different to the weariness which attended London dissipation; she was eloquent on the waste of time, the heartlessness of its pursuits; she anticipated with so much delight her return to the friends of her youth, that they scarcely knew whether to be most enchanted with her affection or her sense. What a foundation mortified vanity is for philosophy!

The Opera was the only place where she had experienced unmixed gratification: from her first glance at its magnificent outline—its sea of white waving plumes, with many a bright eye and jewelled arm shining like its met—its beautiful faces, seen in all the advant—

full dress—full dress, which, like Florimel's magic girdle, is the true test of beauty—to the moment when she lingered to catch the last swell of the superb orchestra—she was “under the wand of the enchanter.” Emily possessed what, like songs and sonnets, must be born with you,—a musical ear; that sixth sense, in search of which you may subscribe to the Ancient Music and the Philharmonic, you may go to every concert—you may go into ecstasies, and encore every song—you may prefer Italian singing, talk learnedly of tone and touch, all in vain—a musical ear is no more to be acquired than Lady H.'s beauty or Mrs. T's grace.

“What a pity,” said old Lord E., a man whom a peerage spoilt for a professor, whose heart had performed Cowley's ballad for the whole succession of prima donnas,—“what a pity you have not seen Pasta—a Greek statue stepped from its pedestal, and animated by the Promethean fire of genius! Why is not such personified poetry immortal? My feeling of regret for my grandchildren half destroys my enjoyment of the present; it is the feeling of an artist, Miss Arundel. Every other species of art carries with it its eternity; we enjoy

the work of the poet, the painter, the sculptor, only as thousands will do after us; but the actor—his memory is with his generation, and that passes away. What a slight idea even I, who speak as a last year's eye-witness, can give of her magnificent Semiramide, defying even fate—of the deep passionate love, ever the ill-requited, expressed in her Medea; her dark hair bound in its classical simplicity round her fine head, her queen-like step—Miss Arundel, I am very sorry for you;" and he stopped in one of those deep pauses of emotion, when the feeling is too great for words.

At this moment Sontag burst upon the ear with one of those *Æolian* sweeps of music so peculiarly her own: "Can any thing be more exquisite?" exclaimed Emily.

"Granted," returned Lord E.; "musical talent is at its perfection in her—the finest natural organ modulated by first-rate science; but where is the mind of Pasta? It is folly to compare beings so opposite: like the child when asked which he preferred, some grapes or a nectarine, I answer, 'both.' The one is the woman of genius—the other a most lovely creature, with the finest of voices."

"How beautiful she is!" rejoined Emily.

adhering with true feminine pertinacity to her opinion, though very willing to choose new ground for her argument.

“ First of all, allow me to observe, I hate to hear one woman praise another’s beauty ; they do it with such a covenanting air of self-sacrifice, such vain-glorious setting forth of—‘ There, you see I am not the least envious.’ Secondly, I beg to differ from you : I remember anxiety was wound up to its highest of expectation when the fair songstress first appeared : she advanced to the front of the stage—her white arms in that half-crossed, half-clasped attitude, which so deprecatingly expresses female timidity—a burst of applause went round in compliment to those superlatively snowy hands and arms ; next, she made a step forward, and in so doing displayed a foot, small enough for the slipper which the stork so maliciously dropped to waken the Egyptian king from his reverie—and a second round of applause announced due appreciation of that ærial foot ; finally, the eyes were raised, and the face turned to the audience, but the face was received in deep silence : that first opinion was the true one. But wait till the next scene, and we shall agree—for our admiration of Malibran is mutual.”

"My first impression of her," said Emily, "was very striking; it was at an evening concert, which, like many others—when some three-drawing-roomed lady enacts patroness, and throws open her house for the sake of tickets, strangers, and a paragraph—was rather dimly lighted. Malibran was seated in an open window, round which some creeping plant hung in profuse luxuriance; the back-ground was a sky of the deepest blue and clearest moonlight—so that her figure was thrown out in strong relief. Her hair was just bound round her head, with a blue wreath quite at the back, as in some of the antique figures of the nymphs, who seem to have wreathed the flowers they had gathered. She was pale, and her large dark eyes filled with that lustrous gaze of absorbed attention only given to music. I thought, what a lovely picture she would have made!"

But here a song commenced; and the silence enforced by a schoolmistress was not stricter than that Lord E. held it a duty to observe during singing.

By the by, both in print and parlance, how much nonsense is set forth touching "the English having no soul for music!" The love of music, like a continent, may be divided into

two parts; first, that scientific appreciation which depends on natural organisation and highly cultivated taste; and, secondly, that love of sweet sounds, for the sake of the associations linked with them, and the feelings they waken from the depths of memory: the latter is a higher love than the former, and in the first only are we English deficient. The man who stands listening to even a barrel-organ, because it repeats the tones "he loved from the lips of his nurse"—or who follows a common ballad-singer, because her song is familiar in its sweetness, or linked with touching words, or hallowed by the remembrance of some other and dearest voice—surely that man has a thousand times more "soul for music" than he who raves about execution, chromatic runs, semi-tones, &c. We would liken music to Aladdin's lamp—worthless in itself, not so for the spirits which obey its call. We love it for the buried hopes, the garnered memories, the tender feelings, it can summon with a touch.

CHAPTER IX.

Very good sort of people.—*Common Conversation.*

A little innocent flirtation.—*Ibid.*

“Enamoured of mine own conceit.”—LORD STIRLING.

{ A fancy ball ! Pray where is the fancy ?—*Rational Question.*

Is it not Rochefoucault who says, “there are many who would never have fallen in love, had they not first heard it talked about ?” What he says of love may extend to a great variety of other propensities. How many *gastronomes*, with mouths never meant but for mutton and mashed potatoes, dilate learnedly on the merits of *salmis* and *sautés*—but far less as matter of taste than flavour ! How many a red-checked and red-jacketed squire exchanges the early hours of the field for the late hours of the House from that universal ambition called example. And what but that powerful argument, “why, every body gives them,” ever made Mrs. Danvers give parties ? Without one of the ordinary in-

duancements which light up the saloon, and cover the supper-table with spun-sugar temples;—she had no son, for whom an heiress was to be drawn from her “bright peculiar sphere” in the mazes of a mazurka—no daughters, making waltzes and window-seats so desirable; not so much as a niece, or even a disposable second cousin;—without one grain of *esprit de société*, or one atom of desire for its success;—the Morning Post might have eulogised for ever the stars that made her drawing-room “a perfect constellation of rank, beauty, and fashion,”—and before Mrs. Danvers had read one half of the paragraph, she would have forgotten the other. She had a good-natured husband, a large fortune, and a noble house in an unexceptionable street; and in giving parties, she only fulfilled the destiny attached to such possessions.

Their year was the most uniform of Time's quietest current. In February they came up to town, for three reasons: they had a family house, to which the family had come up for a century past,—and they were none of those new-light people who so disrespectfully differ from their grandfathers and grandmothers; secondly, all their neighbours came to town,—for their neigh-

bourhood was too aristocratic not to be migratory ; and, thirdly, Mr. Danvers represented a borough which was very prolific in petitions, road-bills, &c. In town they remained till near August, when Mr. Danvers went to Scotland to shoot grouse ; and Mrs. Danvers consoled herself, during his absence, at their seat by wondering how much the children of her parish-school and shrubs had shot up while she was away, and by superintending the house-keeper's room—where, with almost a dash of sentiment, she saw to her husband's grouse being potted, and a whole array of white jars filled with pickles as acid as Mr. Roger's temper, and tongue, and with preserves as sweet as Sir Walter Scott's letter of thanks—(by the by, they say he keeps a set lithographed)—for the first copy of some young poet's first effusion. Partridges and Mr. Danvers re-appeared in September. He shot before Christmas, and hunted after ; while the rest of the time was disposed of by dinners and drowsiness in the afternoon ; but, we must add, with every morning given to kind and useful employment,—for their tenants might have changed landlord and lady some dozen times, and yet have changed for the worse.

But to return to May and its multitudes. Mrs. Danvers was in a black velvet dress, mutually pertinacious in their adherence to each other—and diamonds, which only required new setting to have made her the envy of half her acquaintance, three parts of whom were already crowding her superb rooms. Emily first went through a languid quadrille, with a partner whose whole attention was given to his *vis-à-vis*, and then resumed her seat by Lady Alicia, melancholy and meditative, when her attention was attracted by that most musical inquiry of, "Who is that pretty dark-eyed girl?—a very wood-nymph beside that frozen water-spirit Lady Alicia Delawarr!" The reply was inaudible; but a moment afterwards Mrs. Danvers presented Mr. Boyne Sillery. "Miss Arundel for the next quadrille."

With such an introduction, what partner but would have been graciously received? Perhaps, had not Emily's judgment been a little blinded by the diamond-dust which vanity flings in the eyes, Mr. Boyne Sillery might not have appeared such a very nice young man. He was precisely of an order she had too much good taste to admire—he was, to use the expression a French critic applied to Moore's poetry, *trop parfumé*;

there was an occasional glisten on his curls, that savoured too much of a professor and *l'huile aux mille fleurs*; his tailor was evidently a person of great consideration in his eyes—that was but gratitude; and his chance mention of acquaintance was too carefully correct—that air of the Court Guide which so much betrays the *parvenu* or *débutant*. But Emily was in no mood to be critical. During the quadrille they progressed as rapidly as an American settlement. He gave her his arm to the supper-room: grapes, pine-apple, jelly, and pretty speeches, blended amicably together. Afterwards their engagement was extended to a waltz. They talked of the Corsair—the exquisite picture of Parris's Bridemaid in the British Gallery—and ended with Italy and moonlight; when she was shawled, cloaked, and handed to the carriage with a most exquisite air of anxiety—but not till her partner had learned the number of Lady Alicia's Opera-box, and that they were going the following evening to Mrs. William Carson's fancy ball.

Alas! for the weakness and vanity of the female sex. Mlle. Hyacinthine quite marvelled at her young lady's animation, as she unbound the wreath of lilies from her hair, and received

a caution about to-morrow's costume: such an injunction had not passed Emily's lips for weeks.

Even in this world of wonders, there are two subjects of our especial marvel;—how people can be so silly as to give fancy balls; and, still more, how people can be so silly as to go to them. With a due proportion of the coldness of our insular atmosphere entering like a damp sea-breeze into our composition, we English are the worst people in the world to assume characters not our own—we adapt and adopt most miserably—and a fancy ball is just a caricature of a volume of costumes; only the figures are somewhat stiffer and not so well executed.

Emily was that evening, by the aid of shining spangles and silver gauze, an embroidered sylph; and in attempting to be especially airy and graceful, was, of course, constrained and awkward. However, Mr. Boyne Sillery assured her she looked like the emanation of a moon-lit cloud; and she could not do less than admire the old English costume, by which she meant the slashed doublet and lace ruff of her companion. On they went, through the most ill-assorted groups. Young ladies whom a pretty ankle had seduced into Switzerland, but who now walked about as if struck by sudden

shame at their short blue silk skirts. Sultanas radiant in their mothers' diamonds, which they seemed terribly afraid of losing; and beauties in the style of Charles the Second, wholly engrossed by the relaxation of their ringlets.

But if the ladies were bad, the cavaliers were worse. Was there a youth with a bright English colour, and a small nose with an elevated termination, "he stuck a turban on his brow, and called himself Abdallah." Was there a "delicate atomy" of minute dimensions and pale complexion, he forthwith strutted a hardy Highlander. But our very pages would grow weary were we to enumerate the solemn Rochesters, the heavy Buckinghams, contrasted by Spaniards all slip, slide, and smile—and officers with nothing warlike about them but their regimentals. The very drawing-rooms partook of the general discomfort: one was fitted up as a Turkish tent, where, *à propos des Turcs*, the visitors drank champagne and punch; while a scene in Lapland, terribly true as to chilliness, was filled with *écarté* players and most rheumatic draughts. The master of the house wandered about, looking as if he longed to ask his way; and the mistress, who was queen of some country—whether African or

Asiatic it would have been difficult from her dress to decide—curtsied and complimented, till she seemed equally weary of her dignity, draperies, and guests.

To Emily the scene was new—and novelty is the best half of pleasure. Mr. Boyne Sillery was too attentive not to be agreeable. Attention is always pleasant in an acquaintance till we tire of them. Moreover, he was very entertaining, talked much of every body, and well of none; and ill nature is to conversation what oil is to the lamp—the only thing that keeps it alive. Besides, there were two or three whispers, whose sweetness was good, at least in the way of contrast.

Mr. Boyne Sillery was seventh, eighth, or ninth, among a score of divers-sized children—in a large family, like a long sum, it is difficult to remember the exact number. His father was the possessor of some half-dozen ancestors, a manor, and landed property worth about twelve hundred a-year. He married the daughter of a neighbour whose purse and pedigree were on a par with his own—the heiress of two maiden aunts, one of whom left her a set of garnets, three lockets, and the miniature of an officer; the other a book of receipts, and

three thousand pounds, which, together with what her father gave, was properly settled on the younger scions of the house of Sillery.

Had Mr. S. studied Malthus more, and multiplication less, it would have greatly added to the dignity and comfort of his household. As it was, he had to give up his hunters, and look after his preserves. His wife took to nursing and cotton velvet—and every fiftieth cousin was propitiated with pheasants and partridges, to keep up a hope at least of future interest with the three black graces, “law, physic, and divinity;” nay, even a merchant, who lived in Leatherlug Lane, was duly conciliated at Michaelmas by a goose, and at Christmas by a turkey; the more patrician presents being addressed due west.

“There is a tide in the affairs of men;” and the tide on which Francis Boyne Sillery’s fortune floated was of *esprit de vanille*. A cousin, Colonel Boyne, of whom it is enough to say, the first ten years of his life passed beside his mother’s point apron; the second at a private tutor’s, with seven daughters, all of whom entertained hopes of the youthful pupil; the third series in a stay-at-home regiment, whose cornets and captains were of too delicate material to

brave the balls and bullets of "outrageous fortune;" and the last few years at Paris, a slave to the slender ankle and superlative suppers of an Opera-dancer. Her reform, in a convent, and the necessity of raising his rents, brought the Colonel to England. Soon after his arrival, that patent axletree of action, the not knowing what to do with himself, domesticated him during some weeks of the shooting season at Sillery House, where, not being a sportsman, all the benefit he derived from September was having his morning's sleep disturbed, and seeing partridges that would have made the most exquisite of *sautés*, drenched with an infantine-looking pap called bread sauce.

His attention, among the red-cheeked, red-handed, and large-eared race, that formed the olive plantation around his cousin's table, was drawn to his namesake, Francis Boyne Sillery, by one day missing from his dressing-table a large portion of the most exquisite scent, with which he endeavoured to counteract the atmosphere of goose and gunpowder that filled Sillery House.

Mischief in a large family, like murder in the newspapers, is sure to come out. It was soon discovered that Master Francis, having his deli-

cate nerves disturbed by the odour exhaled from Messrs. Day and Martin's blacking, had poured the *esprit de vanille* over the pumps with which he attended a neighbouring dancing-school.

Great was the indignation excited. With the fear of a lost legacy before their eyes, his mother burnt the shoes—his father took the horse. When Colonel Boyne interfered, with a eulogium on the naturally fine taste of the boy, and a petition to adopt a youth whose predilections were so promising.

A week afterwards, the Colonel left for London, and with him Francis—the grief for whose departure was such as is generally felt by mothers on the marriage of their daughters, or fathers at the loss of supernumerary sons. Colonel Boyne took a house in Duchess Street, and a pretty housekeeper—walked St. James's and Bond Streets—kept both wig and whisker in a state of dark-brown preservation—and wore Hoby's boots to the last. Francis had too much of the parasite in his nature ever to loose his original hold; and after a few years of dread, touching a lady and her daughter who lived opposite, and spent an unjustifiable part of their time at the window—and some occasional terrors of the housekeeper, his cousin

died, leaving him all he had, and not a little disappointment. A few hundreds a-year, and a few more at the banker's, were all that remained of the wasted property of the indulged and the indolent.

But youth, even of the most provident species, rarely desponds. Mr. Boyne Sillery had enough to quiet his tailor and his perfumer—and he lived on, in the hopes of an heiress. In the mean time—as Wordsworth says,

“ Each man has some object of pursuit,
To which he sedulously devotes himself,”—

being too prudent for gambling, too poor for *la gourmandise*, too idle for any employment demanding time, too deficient for any requiring talent—he took to flirting, partly to keep his hand in for the destined heiress he was to fascinate, and partly as a present amusement. He spoke in a low tone of voice—a great thing, according to Shakespeare, in love affairs; he was pale enough for sentiment—made a study of pretty speeches—and was apt at a quotation. Did he give his arm to a damsel, whose white slipper became visible on the crimson-carpeted staircase, it was

“ Her fairy foot,
That falls like snow on earth, as soft and mute.”

If he hesitated a moment, it was to fill up the pause with

"Oh, what heart so wise,
Unbewildered, meet those matchless eyes?"

Did the fair dame wear flowers in her dark hair, he talked of

"Lilies, such as maidens wear
In the deep midnight of their hair."

If she sang, he praised by whispering that her voice

"Bore his soul along
Over the silver waters of sweet song."

Dearly did he love a little religious controversy; for then the dispute could be wound up with

"Then, for my sake, at Allah's shrine,
And I at any god's for thine."

This propensity had brought on him an absurd nickname. A young lady, whose designs on another he had thwarted for a whole evening by a course of ill-timed compliments—and the prosperity of a compliment, even more than of a jest,

"Must lie in the ear of him who hears it,"

—called him Cupid Quotem; and the ridiculous is memory's most adhesive plaster.

It was some half dozen evenings or so before Emily was quite tired—but the past pleasant had degenerated into the present wearisome, that sure prophecy of the future odious—when, on the fifth evening, as he was leaning over her chair at the Opera, and, either in the way of idleness or experiment, his speeches were more than usually sentimental;—by way of diversion, Emily began questioning; and “Who is in that box? Do you know that person in the pit?” turned the enemy most scientifically.

Next to saying sweet things, Mr. Sillery loved saying sour; judge, therefore, if he was not entertaining.

A headach induced Lady Alicia to leave before the opera was half over. While waiting in the crush-room, Mrs. Fergusson and her daughters stopped to exchange those little non-entities of speech called civilities.

“Quite an *attaché*,” said Miss Fergusson, in an audible sneer, as she turned from Emily and Mr. Boyne Sillery.

That night Emily meditated very seriously on the propriety of repressing attentions of which she was tired. It is curious to observe how soon we perceive the impropriety of departed pleasures. Repentance is a one-faced Janus,

ever looking to the past. She thought how wrong it was to lead on a young man—how shameful to trifle with the feelings of another—and how despicable was the character of a coquette. She remembered something very like an appointment—no, that was too harsh a term—she had unguardedly mentioned the probability of their taking a lounge in Kensington Gardens. Thither she determined not to go, and resolved in her own mind to avoid future quadrilles, &c. She went to sleep, lulled by that best of mental opiates—a good resolution.

CHAPTER X.

——— "Collecting toys,
As children gather pebbles by the deep."

MILTON.

"Well," said Mr. Brown, with that ironical pleasantry common to intense despair, "that is what I call pleasant."

The Disowned.

THERE needed very little diplomacy to persuade Lady Alicia to exchange the study of natural history in Kensington Gardens for its pursuit in Howell and James's, where bracelets made of beetles, and brooches of butterflies, are as good as a course of entomology. A gay drive soon brought them to thatemporium of china and chronometers—small of meant to chime to fairy revels—of embossed vases, enamelled like the girdle of Iris, and in which every glass drawer is a shrine

"Where the genii have hid
The jewelled cup of their King Jamshid."

Truly, the black sea of Piccadilly, in spite of mud and Macadam, is, from four to five o'clock

in the season, one of those sights whose only demerit is its want of novelty.

The carriage, entering at Stanhope Gate, first wound its way through a small but brilliant crowd—vehicles, from which many a face glanced fair

——— “As the maids

Who blushed behind the gallery's silken shades,”

in Mokanna's gathering from Georgia and Circassia, and drawn by horses whose skins were soft as the silks and satins of their owners—steeds like the one which owes its immortality to its Macedonian victor, curbed by the slight rein and yet slighter touch of some patrician-looking rider, whose very appearance must be a consolation to those melancholy mortals who prose over the degeneracy of the human race—cabriolets guided apparently as the young prince was waited on in the palace of the White Cat, by hands only, or rather gloves, varying from delicate primrose to pale blue.

Then the scene itself—the sweep of light verdure, the fine old trees which in Kensington Gardens formed the background of the distance, the light plantation of flowering shrubs on one side, the fine statue of Achilles, looking

down like a dark giant disdainfully on the slight race beneath ; the slender and elegant arches through which the chariot wheels rolled as if in triumph ; the opening of the Green Park, ended by the noble old Abbey, hallowed by all of historic association ; the crowded street, where varieties approximated and extremes met ; the substantial coach, with its more substantial coachman, seeming as if they bore the whole weight of the family honours ; the chariots, one, perhaps, with its crimson blind waving and giving a glimpse of the light plume, or yet lighter blonde, close beside another whose olive-green outside and one horse told that the dark-vested gentleman, seated in the very middle, as if just ready to get out, is bound on matters of life and death, *i. e.* is an apothecary. Then the heavy stages—the omnibus, which so closely resembles a caravan of wild beasts—and, last descent of misery and degradation, the hackney-coaches, to which one can only apply what Rochefoucault says of marriages—“ they may be convenient, but never agreeable.”

Of the pedestrians—as in telling a gentleman faults in the mistress he married that morning—the least said, the soonest mended.

No woman loc's well walking in the street: she either elbows her way in all the disagreeableness of independence, or else shuffles along as if ashamed of what she is doing; her bonnet has always been met by some unlucky wind which has destroyed half its shape, and all its set: if fine weather, her shoes are covered with dust, and if dirty, the petticoat is defyingly dragged through the mud, or, still more defyingly, lifted on one side to shew the black leather boot, and draggled in deepest darkness on the other. No female, at least none with any female pretensions, should ever attempt to walk, except on a carpet, a turf, or a terrace. As for the men, one half look as if they were running on an errand or from an arrest, or else were creeping to commit suicide.

So much for the pavement. Then the shops on either side, can human industry or ingenuity go farther? Ah, human felicity! to have at once so many wants suggested and supplied! Wretched Grecian daughters! miserable Roman matrons! to whom shopping was an unknown pleasure, what did, what could employ them? Harm, no doubt; for

“ Satan finds some mischief still
For idle hands to do.”

But, without that grand resource, how they got through the four-and-twenty hours, like the man with the iron mask, remains a mystery.

At Howell's Emily was aroused from the contemplation of a bracelet formed of bees' wings united by lady-birds—by seeing Lady St. Leon, a large, good-natured person—one of those who take up a chariot or a sofa to themselves—one of those fortunate beings who have never had a cross but a diamond one in the world—one who, as a child, was amusing enough to be papa's pet, and pretty enough to be mamma's. She fell in love at sixteen with the very person she ought,—the heir of the estate which adjoined her father's; she was wedded in a month, had a fine large family, none of whom were ever ill; had sons, with an uncle to adopt every one but the eldest, and daughters predestined to be married, and who fulfilled their destinies as soon as possible. She never contradicted her husband, who never contradicted her; and they had gone on to fifty, equally fat and fortunate together. No wonder her ladyship's good humour was enough for herself—and other people.

While discussing with the old lady the effects of an east wind, and the rival merits of liquorice

and lemon lozenges, who should she see examining the sentiments and seals but Mr. Boyne Sillery; and whose conversation should she overhear but that passing between him and a young guardsman, who was bestowing on him his idleness and his company?

"Pray," said Captain Sinclair, "who is that pretty girl whose peace of mind you have been annihilating the last night or two?"

"In good truth, I hardly know—a Miss Arundel—a wood-nymph, the daughter of either a country squire or a clergyman—equipped, I suppose, by a mortgage on either the squire's corn-fields or the parson's glebe land—sent with her face for her fortune to see what can be done during a London season in the way of Cupid and conquest."

"I am at a loss," said his companion, "to understand your devotion."

"It was a mixture of lassitude and experiment, carried into execution by a little Christian charity: she appeared entirely neglected—and your nobodies are so very grateful! But I find the fatigue too much: moreover, one should never let pleasure interfere with business. Last night, at the Opera, one of those crushes which bewilder the uninitiated, did

wonders for me with a pretty (by courtesy) little Oriental, whose forty thousand pounds have lately been suggesting themselves in the shape of a new system of finance."

"And what oriental lure can tempt you to risk your complexion in the city?"

"Oh, a removed one: Miss Goulburn."

Louisa Emma Anastasia Goulburn had fewer drawbacks than most heiresses. Her father was one of those aborigines whose early history was, like most early histories, involved in considerable obscurity. "Nothing in life became him like the leaving it;" for he left one fair daughter and forty thousand pounds to benefit posterity. A sentimental friendship formed at school with a damsel some years her senior, whose calculating talents Mr. Hume himself might envy; induced her, on her friend's marriage, to settle with her in Harley Street; and this friend having neither brother nor brother-in-law, the fair Louisa Emma remained, rather to her own surprise, unappropriated at four-and-twenty. As to characteristics, she had none; and, to use a simile to describe her, she was like that little volume "The Golden Lyre," whose only merit was being printed in golden letters.

"Rich, silly," said Mr. Boyne Sillery, "what rational man could wish for a more pattern wife? I am now going to Kensington Gardens to meet her, where, by the by, I also expect Miss Arundel—one rival queen is often useful with another."

"Well," said Captain Sinclair, "I think I should be amused by a scene between your sylph and your gnome: my cabriolet waits at the corner—shall I drive you?"

"Agreed," rejoined Mr. Sillery, pausing a moment to make choice of two seals, one a kneeling Cupid—and to decide whether it was an apple or a heart which he held in his hand, would have puzzled an anatomist or a naturalist—with the motto *à vous*:—the other, an equally corpulent Cupid chained, the inscription "at your feet." "I always consider," observed our calculating cavalier, "billets the little god's best artillery: the perfumed paper is a personal compliment, and your fair correspondent always applies the seal to herself: like the knights of old, I look to my arms."

A prolonged gaze on the mirror opposite, a satisfactory smile, and our two adventurers left the shop—like Pizarro, intent on a golden conquest. Emily's lip was a little bitten, and

her colour not a little heightened, as she emerged from the expanse of Lady St. Leon's ermine. What a pity it is to throw away a good resolution!

CHAPTER XI.

“ Yet mark the fate of a whole sex.”—POPE.

“ Look on this picture, and on this.”—SHAKESPEARE.

“ I beg to deny the honourable gentleman’s assertion.”

Debates: Morning Chronicle.

THE pleasantest, indeed the only pleasant parties, at their house, were the small dinners, in which Mr. Delawarr excelled: it was said he rather piqued himself upon them. Among the many distinguished in mind, body, and estate, whose countenances were most frequently reflected in the covers to the dishes (most unprepossessing mirrors they are), was a Mr. Morland, a self-acting philosopher, *i. e.* one whose philosophy was exerted for his own benefit—that philosophy we are so apt only to exert for others. He was a widower—had eschewed politics—never gave advice, but often assistance—read much, but wrote not at all—bought a few pictures—had the perfection of a cook

—loved conversation ; and a little judicious listening had made Miss Arundel a first-rate favourite.

Considering how much the ears are cultivated with all the useless varieties of “ lute, sackbut, and psaltery,” it is wonderful their first great quality should be so neglected ; it shews how much common sense is overlooked in our present style of education. Now, considering that it is the first step to general popularity — (that general popularity, to be turned, like a patriot’s, to particular account) — considering that it is the great general principle of conciliation towards East Indian uncles and independent aunts, it shews how much real utility is forgotten, when the science of listening is not made a prominent branch of instruction. So many act on the mistaken principle, that mere hearing is listening — the eyes, believe me, listen even better than the ears — there ought to be a professor of listening. We recommend this to the attention of the London University, or the new King’s College ; both professing to improve the system of education. Under the head of listening, is to be included the arts of opportune questionings, and judicious negatives — those negatives

which, like certain votes, become, after a time, affirmatives.

Mr. Morland.—"So you were at Lady Mandeville's ball last night? The primeval curse is relaxed in favour of you young ladies. How very happy you are!"

Emily rather differed in opinion: however, instead of contradicting, she only questioned. "I should really like to know in what my superlative felicity consists."

Mr. Morland.—"You need not lay such a stress on the monosyllable *my*: it is the lot of your generation; you are young, and youth every hour gives that new pleasure for which the Persian monarch offered a reward; you are pretty"—Emily smiled—"all young ladies are so now-a-days"—the smile shadowed somewhat—"you have all the luxury of idleness, which, as the French cooks say of *le potage*, is the foundation of every thing else."

Emily.—"I am sure I have not had a moment's time since I came to town—you cannot think how busy I have been."

Mr. Morland.—"Those little elegant nothings—those rainbow-tinted bead-workings of the passing hours, which link the four-and-

twenty coursers, of the day in chains light as that slender native of Malta round your neck. I'll just review a day for you: Your slumber, haunted by some last night's whisper 'fairy sound,' is broken by the chiming of the little French clock, which, by waking you to the music of some favourite waltz, adds the midnight pleasures of memory to the morning pleasures of hope. The imprisoned ringlets are emancipated; 'fresh as the oread from the forest fountain,' you descend—you breathe the incense of the chocolate—not more, I hope—and grow conversational and confidential over the green tea, which, with a fragrance beyond all the violets of April, rises to your lip, 'giving and taking odours.' A thousand little interesting discussions arise—the colour of the Comte de S.'s moustache—the captivation of Colonel F.'s curls: there are partners to be compared—friends to be pitied—flirtations to be noted—perhaps some most silvery speech of peculiar import to be analysed.

"After breakfast, there are the golden plumes of your canary to be smoothed—the purple opening of your hyacinths to be watched—that sweet new waltz to be tried on the harp

—or Mr. Bayly, that laureate of the butterflies, has some new song. Then there are flowers to be painted on velvet—the new romance to be read—or some invention of novel embellishment to be discussed with your Mlle. Jacinthe, Hyacinthe, or whatever poetic name may euphoniously designate your Parisian priestess of the mirror.

“Luncheon and loungers come in together—a little news and a little nonsense—and then you wonder at its being so late. The carriage and the cachemere are in waiting—you have been most fortunate in the arrangement of your hat—never did flowers wave more naturally, or plumes fall more gracefully. Your milliner has just solicited your attention to some triumph of genius—you want a new clasp to your bracelet—

‘Visions of glory, spare my aching sight!’

Complexion and constitution are alike revived by a drive in the Park—a white glove rests on the carriage-window—and some ‘gallant gray’ or chestnut Arabian is curbed into curvets and foam by its whispering master.

“I will allow you to dream away the dinner-

hour — what young lady would plead guilty to an appetite? Then comes that hour of anxious happiness—that given to the political economy of the toilette. I rather pique myself on my eloquence; but ‘language, oh, how faint and weak!’ to give an idea of the contending claims of tulle, crape, &c. &c. We will imagine its deliberations ended in decision. Your hair falls in curls like a sudden shower of sunshine, or your dark tresses are gathered up with pearls. You emerge, like a lady lily, delicate in white—or the youngest of the roses has lent its colour to your crape; your satin slipper rivals the silver-footed Thetis of old; and in a few minutes you are among the other gay creatures ‘of the element’ born of Collinet’s music; and among the many claimants for your hand one is the fortunate youth. Midnight passes—and I leave you to your pillow,

‘Gentle dreams, and slumbers light.’

“So much for your past—now for your future. The season is nearly at an end—the captured coronet has crowned your campaign—parchments are taking the place of pasteboard; you

are bewildered in blushes and blonde—diamonds and satin supersede your maiden pearls and gauze—another fortnight, and you are being hurried over the continent with all the rapidity of four horses and felicity, or else giving a month to myrtles, moonlight, and matrimony. Of your consequent happiness I need not speak: 'tis true your duties take a higher character—you have a husband to manage—a visiting-list to decide—perhaps have the mighty duties of patroness to balls, charities, concerts, and Sunday schools to perform. But I have finished:—the advantages of a house and carriage of your own, the necessity of marriage, I trust you are too well an educated young lady not fully to understand.”

“ Now, out upon you, Miss Arundel!” said Lady Mandeville—a lady, both beauty and *bel esprit*, who sat near her, “ to encourage, by smile and silence, so false a painter of our destiny. Do you not see the veiled selfishness of such sophistry? Our said happiness is but the excuse of our exclusion. Whenever I hear a man talking of the advantages of our ill-used sex, I look upon it as the prelude to some new act of authority.”

Mr. Delawarr.—"Ah! you resemble these political economists who, if they see a paragraph in the paper one day rejoicing over the country's prosperity, examine its columns the next to see what new tax is to be suggested."

Lady Mandeville.—"On grounds of utility I object to such a false impression being made on Miss Arundel's mind; it is her destiny to be miserable, and I were no true friend did I not act the part of a friend, and impress upon her the disagreeable necessity."

Mr. Morland.—"Then you would join in the prayer of the Indian heroine, in the Prairie, 'Let not my child be a girl, for very sorrowful is the lot of woman?'"

Lady Mandeville.—"Most devoutly. Allow me to revise Mr. Morland's picture, and, for *Jeanne qui rit*, give the far truer likeness of *Jeanne qui pleure*. I will pass over the days of pap and petting, red shoes and blue sash, as being that only period when any thing of equality subsists between the sexes; and pass on to the time when all girls are awkward, and most of them ugly—days of back-boards and collars, red elbows, French, Italian, musical and calis-

thenic exercises. Talk of education! What course of Eton and Oxford equals the mental fatigues of an accomplished young lady? There is the piano, the harp—the hands and feet equally to be studied—one to be made perfect in its touch, the other in its tread; then, perhaps, she has some little voice, which is to be shaken into a fine one—French and Italian are indispensable—geography, grammar, histories ancient and modern; there are drawings, in crayons and colours—tables to be painted, and also screens—a little knowledge of botany and her catechism, and you have done your best towards giving your daughter that greatest of blessings, as the Edinburgh and Westminster Reviews call it, a solid education. It is true, as soon as the great purpose of feminine existence, marriage, is accomplished, the labour and expense of years will be utterly forgotten and wasted; but you have not the less done your duty. Emerged from the dull school-room, the young lady comes out: period of heart-burnings and balls—of precaution and pretension—of the too attractive younger brother—of the too necessary elder one.—time of love and lectures—the Mount Ararat between

the purgatory of the school-room, and the paradise of an eligible offer :

‘ The horizon’s fair deceit,
Where earth and heaven but seem, alas ! to meet.’

I do not feel my spirits equal to dwelling on the wretchedness of an unappropriated *débutante*, that last stage of maiden misery ; but suppose our aspirant safely settled in some park in the country, or some square in town—Hymen’s bark fairly launched—but

‘ Are the roses still fresh by the bright Bendemeer ?’

A woman never thoroughly knows her dependence till she is married. I pass also the jealousies, the quarrels, the disgusts, that make the catholic questions and corn-bills of married life—and only dwell on one in particular : some irresistible hat, some adorable cap, some exquisite robe, has rather elongated your milliner’s list of inevitables—I always think the husband’s answer greatly resembles the judge’s response to the criminal, who urged he must live,—‘ I do not see the necessity.’ Is not this just the reply for a husband when the fair defaulter urges she must dress ? How will he ejaculate, ‘ I do not see the necessity.’ Truly, when my

milliner sends in her annual account of enormities, like Corneille's Curiatius, '*j'ai pitié de moi-même.*'"

No debate ever ending in conviction, it is of little consequence that here the conversation was interrupted by that rise of feminine stocks which usually takes place during the second glass of claret.

CHAPTER XII.

"I am the most unlucky person in the world."

Common Exclamation.

"People always marry their opposites."

General Remark.

"COACHES all full," said a little bustling waiter, who popped about like a needle through a seam. "No horses to be had,—all at the races,—very bad day, sir,—very bad indeed!"

"Confound the wet!" somewhat hastily ejaculated Mr. Lorraine, resuming his station at the window, which looked into a narrow little street, now almost Venetian with a canal in the middle. The rain came down in torrents,—not a creature was passing; he had not even the comfort of seeing a few people drenched through: somebody was dead in the shop opposite, so that was shut up: he turned to the room,—there was not a glass to enliven its dark dingy lilac walls; the chairs were with those black shining sliding seats, in contempt of all comfort; the fire-place was filled with

shavings; and a china shepherd and shepherdess, clothed in "a green and yellow melancholy," were the penates of the mantel-piece. How stimulating to be thrown on one's own resources! — unfortunately, they are like

"Spirits from the vasty deep.

But will they come when you do call to them?"

No resource but that of swearing came to Edward's help; and he paced the little room, most unpatriotically consigning the climate of his native land, the races, the horses, the inn, and himself, to the devil. At last, he went in search of the landlord, whom he found standing dismally at the door, apparently engaged in counting the rain drops.

"Are you sure no horses are to be procured? — how unlucky!"

"All my luck, sir," said the disconsolate-looking master of the Spread Eagle; "it is just like me, — my best horses knocked up at the races, — they might have been as lame as they pleased next week; but I am so unlucky — I hav'n't fifty pounds in the world; but if I had ten in the Bank of England, there would be a national bankruptcy, on purpose that I might lose it; and if I were to turn undertaker,

nobody would die, that I might'n't have the burying of them : it's just my luck always."

Edward's sympathy was interrupted by the roll of wheels. A phaeton drove up to the door, and in its owner he recognised his young friend Lord Morton ; and a few minutes sufficed to persuade him to take his seat, and accept an invitation to Lauriston Park. It never rains but it pours, and a pouring shower is always a clearing one ; so it proved, and a beautiful evening was darkening into still more beautiful night, as they entered Lauriston Park.

Certainly our English parks are noble places ; and a most disrespectful feeling do we entertain towards the nobleman who sells his deer and ploughs up his land. Why should he be so much richer or wiser than his grandfathers ? Before them swept acres upon acres of green grass—a deep sea of verdure ; here some stately oak, whose size vouched for its age—an oak, the most glorious of trees,—glorious in its own summer strength of huge branches and luxuriant foliage,—glorious in all its old associations, in its connexion with that wild, fierce religion, when the Druids made it a temple,—and thrice glorious in its association with the waves and winds it is its future destiny to master,

and in the knowledge that the noble race have borne, and will bear, the glory of England round the world. It may sound like the after-dinner patriotism of the Freemasons' Tavern; but surely the heart does beat somewhat high beneath the shadow of an old oak.

Beside these were numerous ashes; the light and the graceful, the weeping cypress of England, through whose slight boughs the sunshine falls like rain, beloved of the bee, and beneath which the violet grows best. I scarcely ever saw an ash whose roots were not covered with these treasurers of the Spring's perfume. Far as the eye could reach stretched away young plantations; and if Art had refined upon Nature, clothed the hill side with young plants, shut out a level flat, or opened a luxuriant vista, she had done it with veiled face, and unsandalled foot.

Lord Morton's news, and Lorraine's novelties, were interrupted by the dashing forward of a carriage, over whose horses the coachman had evidently lost all control. Fortunately, the road was narrow; and with too little risk to enable them to display much heroism, our gentlemen secured the reins, and aided the ladies to alight. From its depths emerged the black

velvet hat and white feathers, and finally the whole of the Countess of Lauriston, followed by her daughter. After a due portion of time employed in exclamations, sympathies, and inquiries, how they came to meet was explained as satisfactorily as the end of an old novel, when every thing is cleared up, and every body killed, after having first repented, or married.

Lord Lauriston was laid up with the gout : prevented from attending the county ball, he still remembered his popularity, and "duly sent his daughter and his wife ;" all thought of going was now at an end : however, the purpose was more completely answered, — an overturn in the service of their country was equivalent to half-a-dozen evenings of hard popular work ; and, too much alarmed to re-enter the carriage, or even try the phaeton, they agreed to walk home, and this, too, in the best of humours.

Lady Lauriston delighted to see her son, whose absence at this period was to be feared ; for electioneering dinings and visitings are tiresome — and the young man objected to trouble ; while his non-appearance would have wasted a world of "nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles : " as it was, his mother took his arm with delighted complacency.

Nor was Lady Adelaide less amiable. She was glad, on any terms, to escape from a ball which she called the purgatory of provincials; and besides, the handsome and graceful Lorraine was no bad addition to a family party; while Edward thought to himself, he had never seen any thing so lovely. The cloak, lined with ermine, was drawn in most exquisite drapery round her beautiful figure; the night air had already begun to relax the long ringlets which suited so well with the high white forehead, and a face whose loveliness was of that haughty style to which homage was familiar, and conquest as much a necessity as a desire.

There was something, too, picturesque in the scene: they had now entered the shrubberies, whose luxury of blossom was indeed a contrast to the dark forests where he had lately sojourned,—as much a contrast as the stately beauty at his side was to the pretty laughing peasants of Norway. His imagination was excited; and as yet, with Edward, imagination was more than one half love.

They reached the house; and what with Morton's return, Lorraine's wit, and Adelaide's gratified vanity, the supper passed with a degree of gaiety very rare in a house whose atmo-

sphere might have vied with Leila's snow court in Thalaba for coldness and quiet.

Lord Lauriston was one of those mistakes which sometimes fall out between nature and fortune,—nature meant him for a farmer, fortune made him a peer. In society he was a nonentity; he neither talked nor listened—and it is a positive duty to do one or the other; in his own house he resembled one of the old family pictures, hung up for show, and not for use; but in his farm no Cæsar rebuked his genius. Heavens! what attention he bestowed on the growth of his gray pease! how eloquent he could be on the merits of Swedish turnips! and a new drill, or a patent thrashing machine, deprived him of sleep for a week.

In marriage, as in chemistry, opposites have often an attraction. His lady was as different as your matrimonial affinities usually are; society was her element, and London her “city of the soul.” Her house and her parties occupied the first years of her marriage, in endeavours to embellish the one, and refine the other; but of late the business of life had grown serious; she had been employed in marrying off her daughters. Her systems of sentiment might have vied with her lord's systems of husbandry;

Hitherto they had been eminently successful. Her first daughter had come out during the reign of useful employments; and Lady Susan plaited straw, and constructed silk shoes, till Mr. Amundeville, possessor of some thirty thousand a-year, thought he could not form a more prudent choice, and made her mistress of his saving-bank and himself,—and mistress indeed was she of both. A day of dash and daring came next; and Anastasia rode the most spirited hunter, drove her curricule, told amusing stories, drew caricatures, and laughed even louder than she talked. Lord Shafton married her: he was so delicate, he said, or it was said for him, that he needed protection. Sentiment succeeded; and Laura leant over the harp, and sat by moonlight in a window-seat, sighed when her flowers faded, and talked of Byron and Italy. Sir Eustace St. Clair made her an offer while her dark blue eyes were filled with tears at some exquisite lines he had written in her album.

Lady Adelaide only remained, and an undeniable beauty; her mother did indeed expect this match to crown all the others. Her style was, however, to be wholly different, like that of a French tragedy, classical, cold, and correct,

—indifference, languor, and quietude now united to form a *beau idéal* of elegance.

Of Lord Morton little can be said ; he was rather good-looking, and as good-natured as a very selfish person can be ; and not more in the way than those always are who depend entirely upon others for their amusement.

Such was the family where Edward Lorraine promised to stay for a fortnight — a very dangerous period ; long enough to fall in love, scarcely long enough to get tired. Lady Lauriston was perfectly satisfied with the proceedings ; she was aware of the advantage of the suffrage of one whose authority in taste was held to be despotic ; she calculated on his good report preceding Adelaide in town ; and she felt too much confidence in her daughter's principles to be at all alarmed about her heart.

CHAPTER XIII.

Duties with wants, and facts with feelings jar,
Deceiving and deceived—what fools we are !
The hope is granted, and the wish content,
Alas ! but only for our punishment.

HAD Lady Lauriston been aware of Mr. Lorraine's certainty of succeeding to the Etheringham estates and honours, her plans would have assumed a more appropriating form. Invalid in body, still more so in mind, the present Earl was sinking to the grave, not less surely because the disease was more mental than physical—not less surely because he was young, for youth gave its own mortal keenness to the inward wound. It was curious that, while father and mother were cut out in the most common-place shapes of social automata, both sons possessed a romance of feeling which would greatly have alarmed their rational parents. But no moral perceptions are so blunt as those of the selfish ; theirs is the worst of near-sightedness—that of the heart.

Lord and Lady Etheringhame were blind to the faults, even as they were to the good qualities of their children, simply because to neither had they an answering key in themselves : we cannot calculate on the motions of a world, of whose very existence we dream not. They had a certain standard, not so much of right and wrong as of propriety, and took it for granted from this standard no child of theirs could depart.

Reginald the elder brother's character was one peculiarly likely to be mistaken by people of this sort : his melancholy passed for gravity, his timidity for pride, and were therefore held right proper qualities ; while his fondness for reading, his habits of abstraction, passed for close study, which made his mother call him such a steady young man ; while his father, who had some vague notions of the necessity of great men studying, looked forward to the triumphs of the future statesman. He had been educated, from his delicate health, entirely at home ; and his tutor,—who had only in his life moved from his college to the castle, and who had lived entirely among books—books which teach us at once so much and so little of men,—could see nothing but good in the pupil,

whose eagerness to learn exceeded even his eagerness to teach, and who rarely went out without a book in his pocket.

The gloomy seclusion in which they lived—his health, which rendered those field sports that must have thrown him among young companions unattractive—all fostered the dreaming habits of his mind. He would pass hours under the shade of one old favourite cedar, whose vast boughs required a storm to move them, and through whose thick foliage the sunbeams never pierced; or whole evenings would pass away while he paced the chestnut avenue, ancient as those days when the earls of Etheringham wore belt and spur, and rode beneath those trees with five hundred armed vassals in their train. There he dreamed of life—those dreams which so unfit the visionary for action, which make the real world so distasteful when measured by that within.

Reginald was a poet in all but expression: that deep love of beauty—that susceptibility to external impressions—that fancy which, like the face we love, invests all things it looks on with a grace not their own—that intense feeling which makes so much its own pain and pleasure—all these were his: it were well had

expression been added also—if he had been a poet? Feelings which now fed upon his own heart, would then have found a channel, and in their flow have made a bond between him and his fellow-men; the sorrow that parts in music from the lip often dies to its own singing, and the ill-starred love of its song goes on its way, soothed by the comrades it has called up, vanity and sympathy. The poet dies not of the broken heart he sings; it is the passionate enthusiast, the lonely visionary, who makes of his own hopes, feelings, and thoughts, the pyre on which himself will be consumed. The old proverb, applied to fire and water, may, with equal truth, be applied to the imagination—it is a good servant, but a bad master.

Reginald was just nineteen when a warmer climate was imperatively ordered; and a few weeks saw Reginald and his tutor settled in a villa near Naples—the one happy in the novelty, loveliness, and associations of Italy—the other delighted with their vicinity to a convent rich in curious old manuscripts, and to which he had obtained free access.

It was one of those glorious evenings which crowded the whole wealth of summer into one

single sun-set, when Reginald was loitering through the aisles of a vast church, which seemed, like the faith it served, imperishable. The west was shut out, but the whole building was filled with a rich purple haze—the marble figures on the monuments stood out with a distinctness like real existence, but apart from our own. To me statues never bear aught of human resemblance—I cannot think of them as the likeness of man or woman—colourless, shadowy, they seem the creation of a spell; their spiritual beauty is of another world—and well did the Grecian of old, whose faith was one of power and necessity, not of affection, make his statues deities: the cold, the severely beautiful, we can offer them worship, but never love. It was, however, neither statue nor picture that so rivetted Reginald's attention, but a female kneeling at the shrine of the Virgin in most absorbing and earnest prayer.

Perhaps the most striking, as well as the most picturesque change in costume, is the veil universally worn in Italy; and but that the present day does not pique itself on its romance, it were matter of marvel how a woman could ever be induced to abandon an article of dress so full of poetical and graceful associa-

tion. A veiled lady either is, or ought to be, enough to turn the head of any cavalier under five-and-twenty.

It was, however, admiration, not curiosity; the kneeling female excited; for her veil had fallen back, and her face, only shadowed by a profusion of loose black ringlets, was fully seen: It was perfect: the high noble forehead—the large melancholy eyes—the delicately chiselled oval of the cheek—the small red mouth, belonged to the highest and most superb order of beauty; a sadness stole over its expression of devotional fervour—she suddenly buried her face in her hands: when she raised her head again, the long dark eyelashes were glittering with tears. She rose, and Reginald followed her, more from an impulse than an intention; she stopped and unlocked a small door—it belonged to the convent garden adjoining—and there entering, disappeared.

But Reginald had had ample time to fall desperately in love. He was now at an age when the heart asks for some more real object than the fairy phantoms of its dreams: passions chase fancies; and the time was now come when the imagination would exert its faculty rather to exaggerate than to create. He thought over

the sadness of that angel face, as if he were predestined to soothe it—a thousand scenes in which they were to meet glanced over him—till he found himself leaning back in the darkest recess of a box at the Opera, feeling rather than listening to the delicious music, which floated through the dim atmosphere, so well suited to the reverie of the lover.

How much more is that vague tone of poetry, to be found in almost all, awakened by the obscurity of the foreign theatres!—in ours, the lights, the dresses, &c. are too familiar things, and prevent the audience from being carried away by their feelings,—as they are when music and poetry are aided by obscurity like mystery, and silence deep as thought. A murmur of applause, and a burst of song thrilling in its sweetness, aroused Reginald, and, leaning over the front, he saw—her dark hair gathered with three bands of costly diamonds in front, and a starry tiara behind—her crimson robe shining with gold—her dazzlingly white arms raised in eloquent expostulation—her voice filling the air with its melody—in the Medea of the stage he saw the devotee of the Virgin.

Pass we over the first steps of attachment—so delicious to tread, but so little pleasant to

retrace, either for ourselves or others—till another evening of purple sunset saw, in that church where they had first met, Reginald kneeling by the side of the beautiful Francisca, while a priest pronounced the marriage blessing—a pale, aged man, to whose wan lips seemed rather to belong the prayer for a burial than aught that had to do with life or enjoyment.

Truly does passion live but in the present. Reginald knew his marriage was not legal; but her he loved was now his by a sacred vow—and when the future came, he might be entirely his own master: the Janus of Love's year may have two faces, but they look only on each other. The worst of a mind so constituted is, that its feelings cannot last, least of all its love; it measures all things by its expectations—and expectations have that sort of ideal beauty: no reality can equal: moreover, in the moral as in the physical world, the violent is never the lasting—the tree forced into unnatural luxuriance of blossom bears them and dies. Francisca, beautiful but weak, without power to comprehend, or intellect to take part with her lover, somewhat accelerated the re-action; and Reginald now saw the full extent of the sacrifice he had made, and the mortifications that

were to come, since love had no longer strength to bear him through them.

If there be one part of life on which the curse spoken at Eden rests in double darkness—if there be one part of life on which is heaped the gathered wretchedness of years, it is the time when guilty love has burnt itself out, and the heart sees crowd around those vain regrets, that deep remorse, whose voices are never heard but in the silence of indifference. Who ever repented or regretted during the reign of that sweet madness when one beloved object was more, ay a thousand times more, than the world forgotten for its sake? But when the silver cord of affection is loosened, and the golden bowl of intoxicating passion broken—when that change which passes over all earth's loveliest has passed, too, over the heart—when that step which was once our sweetest music falls on the ear a fear, not a hope—when we know that we love no more as once we loved—when memory broods on the past, which yields but a terrible repentance, and hope turns sickening from a future, which is her grave—if there be a part of life where misery and weariness contend together till the agony is greater than we can bear, this is the time.

Francisca saw the change, and in a few weeks Reginald was almost startled by the change in her also; but here was an external change—the bright cheek had lost its colour and outline, and she was wasted, even to emaciation. He was often absent from their villa, wandering, in all the restlessness of discontent, in the wild environs of Vesuvius; and on every return did he observe more alteration, when remorse urged to kindness, and he reproached himself bitterly for leaving her so much to solitude. Under this influence he returned suddenly and unexpectedly one day, and sought Francisca in a fit of repenting fondness; a faint moan made him enter the room, and there, on the bare rough pavement, knelt Francisca. A coarse dress of sackcloth strangely contrasted with her delicate shape—drops of blood were on the floor—and her slight hand yet held the scourge: a shriek told her recognition of Reginald, and she fell senseless on the ground.

In her state of bodily weakness, the least sudden emotion was enough to bring on a crisis—and before night she was in a brain fever; from her ravings and a few questions he learnt the cause. She had marked his growing coldness, and, with the wild superstition of the ardent

and the weak, had held it as a judgment for loving a heretic; the belief that some fearful judgment was hanging over both grew upon her daily; and by fasts, rigid and severe penance, she strove to avert the penalty, and obtain pardon. Body and mind alike sank under this; and she died in a fearful paroxysm of terror, without one sign of recognition, in Reginald's arms. He returned to England too late to see his father living; and the first object he met in the old chestnut avenue were the black horses, the dark plumes of the hearse, which were bearing Lord Etheringhame to the vault of his ancestors.

Reginald thenceforth lived in the deepest seclusion: one only object yet had an interest for him—his young brother; perhaps the very loneliness of his affection made it the deeper. In many points of character Edward resembled his brother; but he had an energy which the other had not—a buoyancy of spirit, to which difficulty was a delight. As he advanced in life, many an effort did he make to rouse Lord Etheringhame from his lethargy, but in vain. Grief, after all, is like smoking in a damp country—what was at first a necessity becomes afterwards an indulgence.

CHAPTER XIV.

"Will you come and spend a long day with me?"

Penalties of Friendship.

"Delightful and intellectual society."—*False Concords.*

"To all and singular in this full meeting,
Ladies and gallants, Phœbus sends you greeting;
From his more mighty sons, whose confidence
Is placed in lofty rhyme and humble sense,
Even to his little infants of the time
Who write new songs, and trust in tune and rhyme."

DRYDEN.

"Look you, friend, it is nothing to me whether you believe
it or not; what I say is true."—*Love for Love.*

Of all places, London is the best for an *incognita* acquaintance; cards may be exchanged to all eternity without a meeting, and the various circles revolve like planets in their different systems, utterly unconscious of the means and modes of each other's existence. A friend, whom Emily had earnestly, though unsuccessfully, endeavoured to see, thanks to a headach of Lady Alicia's, found them at home. This was

a Mrs. Smithson, who had formerly been Emily's governess; and our heroine was still young enough for the attraction of friendship, to recall with rapture her first readings of *Matilde* and the *Corsair*, and to remember with delight her first essay as *confidante*. Miss Hughes being in love at the time, had only left Arundel Hall to become the wife of Mr. Smithson; a gentleman whose station and salary now authorised his taking a house and a wife, and, at forty-five, instituting a new search after happiness.

Mrs. Smithson entered the room, and received Emily's welcome and embrace evidently a little disorganised by the latter; not but that she was very glad to see her former pupil, but it is very trying to have the drapery of one's shawl destroyed. A few moments; and they were conversing with true feminine fluency. Emily had to mention the curate's marriage, the death of the apothecary, and to say how well both uncle and aunt were. Mrs. Smithson had to state that she had three children—to wonder Emily had grown so much—and each had to rejoice over meeting with the other. Besides, there was a most interesting subject to be discussed: Mrs. Smithson had enchanted the world with a novel—not a person less than

a baronet figured in its pages—the heroine had a most authentic milliner—it was rumoured that Lady Holderness was the Marchioness of L.; and, altogether, it had had the most circulating success. Moreover, she had something to say about her husband, who had written a treatise on bats and beetles.

Emily was at that happy age which takes so much on trust: and her praise was quite elaborate in its enthusiasm. What a charm there must be in praise, when it consoles for all the miseries and mortifications of literature! The fair and fashionable author now mentioned the object of her visit, which was to induce her young friend to spend a long day with her, to which her young friend readily assented. “I shall be delighted—I will come early—you will excuse my dining in a morning dress—and we shall have such a delightful chat.”

Mrs. Smithson’s face perceptibly lengthened at the words “morning dress.” “Why, my sweet girl, Monday is my little *conversazione*; my literary pursuits require literary connexions—only a very small circle, but all *talented* people: however, you will look well in any thing.”

But before the Aspasia of Marylebone de-

parted, it was settled that Emily's maid should be in Harley Street to attend to the necessary change of costume; and, this important arrangement decided, Mrs. Smithson's green pelisse and blue bonnet departed—blue and green, like the title of an old novel, “paired, but not matched.” By the by, how much bad taste is shewn in the selection of colours! Out upon the folly of modern liberty, which has abolished sumptuary laws, and left us to all the horrors of our own inventions! Liberty of conscience is bad enough—the liberty of the press is still worse—but worst of all is liberty of taste in dress to common people.

Monday and two o'clock found Emily in Harley Street, rather sooner than she was expected, as was evident from that silken rustle which marks a female retreat. A discreet visitor on such occasions advances straight to the window or the glass: Emily did the latter; and five minutes of contemplation ascertained the fact that her *capote* would endure a slight tendency to the left. She then took a seat on the hard, or, as they say of hounds, the hide-bound sofa—the five minutes lengthened into twenty, and she sought for amusement at a most literary-looking table. Alas! she had read

the novels—for treatises she had no taste—and two German volumes, and three Latin, together with a scientific journal, gave her a cold chill. While thus employed, a red-faced, loud-voiced servant girl threw open the door, and howled, “If you please, ma’am, Master Adolphus has thrown the Library of Entertaining Knowledge at Master Alfred’s head, because he tore the Catechism of Conchology;” but before Miss Arundel could express her regret at such misapplication of knowledge, the girl had vanished in all the dismay of a mistake.

At last Mrs. Smithson appeared. “My dear Emily, you have waited—I forgot to tell you that I devote the early part of the day to the dear children—I never allow my literary and domestic duties to interfere: you cannot commence the important business of education too soon, and I am but just emerged from the study.”

This was a little at variance both with the servant’s appearance and her own laboured toilette, whose want of neatness was the result of hurry and bad taste, not of after-disorganisation. It is amazing how oppressive is the cleverness of some people, as if it were quite a duty in you to be clever too—or, as I, once

heard a little child say, "Oh, mamma, I always speak to Mrs. S. in such dictionary words!"

"Slowly and sadly" did the morning pass. Alas! for the victim of friendship, whom sentiment or silliness seduces into passing a long day! The upright sitting on the repulsive sofa—the mental exhaustion in searching after topics of conversation, which, like the breeze in Byron's description of a calm, "come not"—the gossip that, out of sheer desperation, darkens into scandal; if ever friends or feelings are sacrificed under temptation too strong to be resisted, it is in the conversational pauses of a long day; and worst of all, a long day between people who have scarcely an idea or an acquaintance in common, for the one to be exchanged, or the other abused—communication or condemnation equally out of the question. Mrs. Smithson secretly pitied herself for wasting her colloquial powers on that social non-entity, a young lady; and Miss Arundel was somewhat bewildered by the march of her former friend's intellect. Divers of those elegant harmonies, which make musical the flight of time in London, verified the old rhyme, that

"Come what may,
Time and the tide wear through the roughest day."

The muffin-boy announced three o'clock—the pot-boy clanking his empty pewter was symptomatic of four—the belman tolling the knell of the post announced five—and, at length, a heavy hard-hearted rap proclaimed the return of Mr. Smithson; a gruff voice was heard in the passage—a ponderous step on the stairs—the door and his boots creaked, and in came the author of the treatise on bats and beetles, followed by a blue-coated, nankeen-trouserred young man, whose countenance and curls united that happy mixture of carmine and charcoal which constitute the Apollo of a Compton Street counter. Mr. Smithson was equally sullen and solemn-looking, with a mouth made only to swear, and a brow to scowl—a tyrant in a small way—one who would be arbitrary about a hash, and obstinate respecting an oyster—one of those tempers which, like a domestic east wind, “spares neither man nor beast,” from the unhappy footman that he cursed, to the unlucky dog that he kicked.

A minute specimen of humanity, in a livery like a jealous lover's, of “green and yellow melancholy,” announced dinner. Mr. Smithson stalked up to Emily, Mr. Perkins simpered

up the hostess, and they entered a dismal-looking parlour, whose brick-red walls and ditto curtains were scantily lighted by a single lamp, though it was of the last new patent—to which a dim fire, in its first stage of infant weakness, gave small assistance.

Mr. Smithson, who, as member of a public office, thought that church and state ought to be supported—which support he conceived to consist in strict adherence to certain forms—muttered something which sounded much more like a growl than a grace, and dinner commenced.

At the top was a cod's shoulders and head, whose intellectual faculties were rather overmuch developed; and at the bottom was soup called mulligatawny—some indefinite mixture of curry-powder and ducks' feet, the first spoonful of which called from its master a look of thunder and lightning up the table. To this succeeded a couple of most cadaverous fowls, a huge haunch of mutton, raw and red enough even for an Abyssinian, flanked by rissoles and oyster patties, which had evidently, like Tom Tough, seen "a deal of service:" these were followed by some sort of nameless pudding—and so much for the luxury of a family dinner,

which is enough to make one beg next time to be treated as a stranger.

Conversation there was none—Mr. Smithson kindly sparing the lungs of his friends, at the expense of his own. First, the fire was sworn at—then, the draught from the door—then, the poor little footboy was encouraged by the pleasant intelligence that he was the stupidest blockhead in the world. Mr. Perkins sat preserving his silence and his simper; and to the lady of the house it was evidently quite matter of habit—a sort of accompaniment she would almost have missed.

The truth is, Mr. Smithson had just married some twenty years too late—with his habits, like his features, quite set, and both in a harsh mould. Young Lady! looking out for an establishment—meditating on the delights of a house of your own—two maids and a man, over whom you are set in absolute authority—do any thing rather than marry a confirmed bachelor—venture on one who has been successful with seven succeeding wives, with ten small children ready made to order—walk off with some tall youth, who considers a wife and a razor definitive signs of his growth and his sense; but shun the establishment of a bachelor

who has hung a pendulum between temptation and prudence till the age of 35 but of all subjects, age is the one on which it is most invidious to descant.

The cloth was removed, and sudden commotion filled the passage :

“ At once there rose so wild a yell
Within that dark and narrow dell ;”

&c. &c. &c.

and in came Master Adolphus and Master Alfred in full cry, having disputed by the way which was to go first—also a baby, eloquent as infancy usually is, and, like most youthful orators, more easily heard than understood. The boys quartered themselves on the unfortunate strangers ; and Mrs. Smithson took the infant, which Emily duly declared was the sweetest little creature she had ever seen. On going up stairs, Emily found Mlle. Hyacinthe shivering—for, with the usual inhumanity of friends, there was no fire ; and it was one of those wet, miserable evenings, gratis copies distributed by November through the year.

Suicide and antipathy to fires in a bed-room seem to be among the national characteristics. Perhaps the same moral cause may originate both. We leave this question to the West-

minster Review. Between grumbling and garnishing, discontent and decoration, Emily was some time before she descended to the drawing-room, which was half-full or more on her entrance. She took a seat with a most deferential air—for she was a little awestruck by the intellectual society in which she now found herself—and Mrs. Smithson, equally eager to conciliate a reviewer, who stood on her right, and a poet, who stood on her left, had quite forgotten the very existence of her sweet young friend.

With curiosity much excited, but wholly ungratified, Emily looked eagerly round for a familiar face, but in vain; at last, a lady, who had been watching her for some time, said :

“ Will you promise not to suspect me of an intention to steal your pearl chain, if I offer my services as catalogue to this exhibition of walking pictures?”

“ I will, on the contrary, be grateful with all the gratitude of ignorance—there must be so many people here I should so like to know something about.”

“ I see,” rejoined her companion, “ that you are a stranger, and have no credentials in the shape of ‘ such a sweet poem ’—‘ such a delight-

ful tale.' No one has introduced you as that young lady whose extraordinary talents have delighted all the world. I suspect that, like myself, you are here on sufferance."

"Mrs. Smithson is a very old friend."

"And my husband has written a pamphlet on the corn-laws. As for myself, I neither read nor write; but I know something of most of the authors here, and their works. Knowledge is much like dust—it sticks to one, one does not know how."

Emily thanked Mrs. Sullivan (for such was her name), and drew closer to her side, with that sense of loneliness which is never felt so strongly as in a crowd. For some time she listened to every word she could catch, till at length the disagreeable conviction was forced upon her, that clever people talked very much as others did. Why, she actually heard two or three speaking of the weather. Now, to think of a genius only saying, "What a cold day we have had!"

"Whence do you come?" asked Mrs. Sullivan, of a young man who looked at least intelligent.

"I have been spending the day at Hampstead, and beautiful it was: the fog, which, as Wordsworth says of sleep,

‘Covered the city like a garment,’

left the heath clear, and the sky blue; and there was sunshine enough to keep me in spirits for the rest of the week.”

“A most Cockney expedition, truly!”

“My dear Mrs. Sullivan, why will you indulge in common-place contumely? Believe me, it is only those

‘In crowded cities pent’

who fully enjoy the free air above their heads, and the green grass beneath their feet: to them, as to the lately recovered sick man,

‘Each opening breath is paradise.’

How often have I closed my book in weariness, or flung down the pen in vexation of spirit, and have gone forth into the open air, at first thoughtfully and heavily; but as the rows of houses give way to hedges, streets to fields crowded with daisies—

‘The Danaë of flowers,
With gold heaped in her lap,’

and I catch the shadows of two or three old trees, my heart and steps grow lighter, and I proceed on my way rejoicing. I forget the dull realities of experience—experience, that

more than philosophy 'can clip an angel's wings;,' I forget that all 'mine earlier hopes' are now set down

'Mid the dull catalogue of common things;'

and I return with a handful of wild flowers, or a branch covered with acorns (the most graceful wreath that ever Oread wore), and imbued with poetry enough to resist the dull thick atmosphere of town for full four-and-twenty hours;—and then think how beautiful the environs of London really are!"

"Yes, putting white stuccoed villas, verandas, and pic-nic parties, out of the question."

"Putting nothing at all out of the question: it is a very morbid or very affected taste which turns away from aught of human comfort or human enjoyment."

"The other evening," continued Mrs. Sullivan, "I heard you quoting,

'There is a pleasure in the pathless woods.'

"As if," rejoined the young poet, "one were always obliged to be of the same opinion! However, so far I am ready to admit, that the enjoyment of a wild and a lonely scene is of

a higher and more imaginative quality than that of merely beautiful cultivation; and I must add, I do not at all agree with Marmontel, who said, that whenever he saw a beautiful scene he longed for some one to whom he could say, 'How beautiful!'"—

"Which," interrupted Mrs. Sullivan, "being translated into plain English, means that vanity and imagination were at variance; and a thousand fine things that he might have said about the prospect with such effect, if he had been listened to, were now being wasted on himself."

"To again quote the oracles of my high-priest, Wordsworth, there is nothing like

' The harvest of a quiet eye,
That broods and sleeps on its own heart.'

What ' truths divine ' crowd every page of Wordsworth's writings! I sometimes wish to be a modern Alexander, that I might have Mount Athos carved into, not my own statue but his."

"Nay," exclaimed Mrs. Sullivan, " spare me ' lectures on poetry.' I am worse than even Wordsworth's fitch. He says,

{ The very bacon shewed its feeling,
{ Swinging from the smoky ceiling."

Now, I am free to confess the very bacon has more feeling than I have: so dissipate your lakeism by telling yonder traveller I want to hear some of his adventures. What variety of talent," said Mrs. Sullivan, as he turned away, "does that young man possess! He has *l'esprit comme un diable*, and a sense of the beautiful *comme un ange*. I cannot characterise his poetry better than in his own words:

'What is it but a heavenly breath
Along an earthly ~~lyre~~' " *212 r -*

As the young traveller Mrs. Sullivan had summoned crossed the room, he was intercepted by a lady, whose very gracious smile on him was the essence of conciliation; it seemed, however, like English sunshine, too precious to be long enjoyed. Some other "gentle tassel" was to be lured with all the skill of complimentary falconry, and with one more smile, and a parting bend of necessity and regret, the traveller approached with the "self-betraying air" of the flattered.

"My southern voyage," said he, after the first greetings with Mrs. Sullivan were over, "is enough for a season's reputation. Mrs. Harcourt has just been expressing her admi-

fatal truth—the vessel was under quarantine, and once on board there was no quitting it. All that the captain could do was to grumble, and say he supposed she must have his cabin; and there this candidate for the honour of the Athenians was left to reflect on her ball next evening, and the chance of catching the plague,—for cholera was not then invented to fright the isle.”

All around laughed, as people always laugh at misfortunes, *i. e.* with all their heart.

“ I understand,” observed Mrs. Sullivan, “ that the Adelphi intends converting itself into an amphitheatre, and treating the spectators, after the fashion of the Roman conquerors, to a show of wild beasts. Why do you not recommend them to give a bull fight ?”

“ Such an animated account of one as I have just been reading in the *Talba*, where a young Moorish prince vanquishes, single-handed, in the arena, a black and ferocious bull ! I have some thoughts of turning author myself, on purpose to dramatise one of the most interesting stories I have read. How pretty Mrs. Yates would look as Inez de Castro ! Think of the splendid scene of the bull fight, its chivalric and romantic associations !”

"I see but one difficulty—who is to take the bull by the horns?"

"Oh, somebody would be found to run 'the glorious risk.' I despair of nothing now-a-days."

"In such a mood men credit miracles," said Mrs. Sullivan.

"I," replied the traveller, "am just come from witnessing one. Do you remember how your friend S——'s words were like the friar's steps in Romeo and Juliet? He says:

'How oft to-night
Have my old feet stumbled;'

and if he did get out six words, seven were unintelligible. He now speaks as fluently and as unaffectedly as myself. I cannot say more."

"What do you mean?"

"Simply that S——, in utter despair at being thus disabled from enlightening his audience, betook himself to Mr. Jones, who has undeniably demonstrated that he possesses the gift of tongues."

"I should like to see S——: he will be so gloriously theatrical."

"You will be disappointed in this charitable expectation. Jones has vanquished all his

violent distortions, and replaced them by the calm style and effective delivery of the gentleman. His aim, and, I must add, his accomplishment, is to teach the art of speaking with ease and fluency."

"Does he instruct ladies?"

"I hope not,

'That were but sharpening the dart,
'Too apt before to kill.'

Emily's whole attention was now given to a lady speaking near her,—the first few sentences were lost, but she caught the following:—

"When I say your gratitude ought to be excited by my vanity, I divide the functions of vanity into two influences; the one is, when it is passive, I only feed upon the memories it brings; the other is, when it is active, and prompts me to exert myself for your entertainment; and it is while thus acting for your amusement that it calls on you to be grateful, if not gratified."

"But who goes into society,—at least those who have any pretensions," said a young man, clever-looking, and with an animated manner, which gave additional attraction to a pointed and brilliant style of conversation;—"who

goes into society without 'a marriage robe,' and, like that worn of yore, brilliant, embroidered, and concealing the real figure?

'We do live.

Amid a world of glittering falsehoods.'

"You seem to consider it," returned the lady, "expedient for every one termed, by right or courtesy, distinguished, to play truant to themselves, avoiding all external shew of the thoughts or the feelings by which such distinction may have been acquired: as if the earnestness of genius were less endurable than the heartlessness of the world; nay, as if the polished chain mail of the latter were the only garb fit to be worn by the former."

"Exactly my idea. I hold that we are the knights of conversation, and ought to go into its arena armed at all points, for a harsh and violent career."

"I do not see that we are at all called upon to pay so costly a compliment to society, as to assume a character diametrically opposed to our real one,—to utter sentiments we secretly disbelieve,—and to be as angry with our better nature for bursting from restraint, as at other times with our own inferior nature for refusing

to submit to it. I think wisdom may wear motley; and truth, unlike man, be born laughing. Genius ought every where to be true to itself, and to its origin, the Divine Mind; to its home, the undying spirit; to its power, that of being a blessing; to its reward, that of being remembered."

"The speaker to whom you have been listening with such attention is Miss Amesbury; to use a very fine phrase from some magazine, 'a brilliant star in our brilliant galaxy of female writers.' I characterise her conversation by a fine line from Marlow,

'A frosty night, when heaven is lined with stars.'

I recall a thousand such beautiful expressions. I remember her comparing society 'to a honeycomb, sweet but hollow.' Again, she calls friendship's memory 'the fame of the heart.' Her last work is my favourite. The character in the second tale called Egeria is meant for Mrs. Hemans—a most exquisite sketch, written with all the delicacy of feminine tact, and all the warmth of feminine feeling. It is a beautiful answer to that false reproach, that one woman cannot praise another.

"Miss Amesbury is especially happy in the

use of quotations—and an apt quotation is like a lamp which flings its light over the whole sentence. I cannot help thinking, though, in her first story (the History of a Modern Corinne) she has fallen into the common and picturesque error, of making her woman of genius peculiarly susceptible of love—a fact I greatly doubt. Every body knows that love is made up of vanity and idleness. Now, a successful literary career gratifies the vanity, while it gives employment. Love is not wanted as flattery, nor as occupation—and is therefore cut off from its two strong-holds. Besides, the excitement of a literary career is so great, that most sentiments seem tame by its side. Homage you have from the many,—praise is familiar to your ear; and your lover's compliment seems cold when weighed against that of your reviewer. Besides, a lover is chiefly valued for the consequence he gives; he loses one great charm when you have it without him. If I wanted to inspire an intense devoted attachment, I would scarce seek it from genius: it gives you but a divided heart. Love bears no rival near the throne—and fame is as 'mighty autocrat as he.'”

“ But do you see the gentleman she has just addressed, perhaps with a hope to conciliate a critic:—vain hope! when the critic is made out of the remains of a disappointed poet, who finds it easier to tell people what they should read, than to produce what they will read. One would think that an unsuccessful volume was like a degree in the school of reviewing. One unread work makes the judge bitter enough; but a second failure, and he is quite desperate in his damnation. I do believe one half of the injustice—the severity of ‘ the ungentle craft ’ originates in its own want of success; they cannot forgive the popularity which has passed them over, to settle on some other; and they come to judgment on a favourite author, with a previous fund of bitterness—like an angry person, venting their ^{rage} not on the right offender, but on whoso chances to be within their reach.”

“ The principal remark that I have made on London society is, its tone of utter indifference. No one seems to care for another.”

There was a truth to Emily in this speech that made her turn to the speaker. He was good-looking, and singularly tall.

“ That is the author of a most chivalric history of Mary Queen of Scots. The enthusiasm of a young man about beauty and misfortune is as good in taste as it is in feeling. He is a Scotchman, certainly not

‘ From pride and from prejudice free;’

for I verily believe that he looks upon the rest of the world as ‘ a set of niggers,’—an inferior race, on this side the Tweed. We English are much more liberal in that respect; we have always been ready to offer homage,

‘ When we saw by the streamers that shot so bright,
That spirits were riding the northern light.’

I remember his saying to an English author, ‘ It is to Edinburgh you must look for your literary fame.’ The best answer would have been the Highland proverb,

‘ ’Tis a far cry to Lochow.’

It is singular how long national hostility lasts, and how many shapes it will take! That a prejudice still exists between the Scotch and the English, is no credit to either. Were I to allot each their shares of illiberality, I should say, there are six of the one and half-a-dozen of the

other; and as I am one who utterly despair of improving the human race, I have no doubt it will continue."

"Who is that gentleman," exclaimed Emily, "whose eye I have just caught, so full of mirth and malice?"

"That is the Philip de Commines of King Oberon, the Froissart of Fairyland—a re-union of the most opposite qualities—a zealous antiquary, yet with a vein of exquisite poetry, side by side with one of quaint humour. Do let me tell you a most original simile of his: he compares fried eggs to gigantic daisies. The oddity of the likeness is only to be equalled by its truth. And to give you one touch of poetry: speaking of his return across a common, one winter night, he made use of the following (I think) singularly fine phrase:

'The silence of the snows.'

"The person next to him is the writer of some entertaining and graphic travels in the East. Travelling is as much a passion as ambition or love. He ascribes his first desire of seeing Palestine to hearing his mother (who read exquisitely) read the Old Testament aloud.

His imagination was haunted by the Dead Sea, or the lilies of Sharon: when he slept, he dreamed but of the cedars of Lebanon; and as a boy, he used to sit by the sea-side, and weep with his passionate longing to visit the East. Thither he travelled as soon as his will was master of his conduct.

“ But do turn to one of my great favourites—that is Allan Malcolm. Does he not look as if he had just stepped across the border, with the breath of the heath and the broom fresh about him? There is an honesty in his nature which keeps him unspotted from the world—the literary world, with its many plague-spots of envyings, jealousies, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness. The face so sweet in its matron beauty is that of ‘his bonnie Jeane’ beside. I like to meet him sometimes: it is good for one’s moral constitution to know there are such things as kindness and integrity to be found in the world. A countryman is at this moment beside him—a stanch border minstrel, who would any day uphold the thistle to be a more poetical plant than the laurel. I own myself I think it would be more characteristic. I suspect the northern reviewer was

thinking as much of the Fitful Fancies of the poet in his own person as of those in his works; when he said 'that his ideas stood stiff and strong, as quills upon the fretful porcupine.' A little speech I heard him make will give you a clearer idea of him than a long description. We were talking of dancing, when he said, 'I loathe the woman who dances, and despise the man.'"

"And I liked his poetry so much!" exclaimed Emily, in the most reproachful of tones.

Miss Arundel's whole attention was now attracted by a female in a Quaker dress—the quiet dark silk dress—the hair simply parted on the forehead—the small close cap—the placid and subdued expression of the face, were all in such strong contrast to the crimsons, yellows, and blues, around. The general character of the large, soft, dark eyes, seemed sweetness; but they were now lighted up with an expression of intelligent observation—that clear, animated, and comprehensive glance, which shews it analyses what it observes. You looked at her with something of the sensation with which, while travelling along a dusty road,

the eye fixes on some green field, where the hour flings its sunshine, and the tree its shadow, as if its fresh, pure beauty, was a thing apart from the soil and tumult of the highway.

"You see," said Mrs. Sullivan, "one who, in a brief interview, gave me more the idea of a poet than most of our modern votaries of the lute. I was so struck with any one coming up to London, filled but with historic associations, looking upon the Tower as hallowed by the memory of Lady Jane Grey, and of Westminster Abbey as (to use the American Halleck's noble expression) a 'Mecca of the mind,' with England's great and glorious names inscribed on the consecrated walls. She is as creative in her imaginary poems, as she is touching and true in her simpler ones."

A slight movement, and a few exclamations, drew off their attention to the little supper table. A gentleman had, instead of placing his fork in a sandwich, inserted it into a lady's hand. The injury was not much; but the quaintness of the excuse was what amused the bystanders.

"I beg pardon," said the offender, with the most unruffled composure of countenance; "but I mistook the hand for white bait."

"A fitting compliment for one whose mind is the most singular mixture of pun, poetry, conceits, simplicity, that ever mingled the mime and the minstrel. But I hold that he is rather the cause of mirth in others than merry himself. He is pale, silent, serious; and I never heard an instance of laughter recorded against him. In his most comic vein, the idea of death seems ever present. His favourite imagery is death's heads, coffins, skeletons: even his merriest ballads turn upon the death of their subject. His faculty of perversion outdoes any temper in the world. One of the oddest applications of a quotation was in a preface, where, speaking of his own sketches, he says, 'Like the tape-tied curtains of the poet, I was never meant to draw.' With this is mingled a gift of the most touching poetry. I doubt whether the whole of 'our British poets,' drawn up in battle array, could send forth specimens more calculated to touch even a critical Coriolanus than some of his short and beautiful pieces."

"There is something," said Emily, "that interests me in the face of that gentleman. Who is he?"

"One of the very few persons of whom I

have a pleasure in speaking—an author, yet free from envy—a critic, yet free from malice. Charles Townsend said of old, ‘to tax and to please, any more than to love and be wise, is not given to man;’ and to prefer and yet please, is a difficult task for an editor. Perhaps it is because liberal and kindly feelings are to be found in the object of your inquiry. It is a pleasant thing to enter his house. It is as well to see domestic happiness now and then, in order to be able to talk about it as a wonder. Congenial in tastes, united in pursuits, he is fortunate in a wife, who is pretty enough to be silly, and yet clever enough to be plain, and kind and good enough to be either.”

At this moment, a lady came up and spoke to Mrs. Sullivan, with that warm kindliness of manner, which, like love, air, or sunshine, must win its way every where.

My dear “That is the very person we were speaking of, and the most charming and fittest of writers for youth,—at least to them have her last works been chiefly addressed; but the oldest might go back to the chronicles of her school-room for the mere pleasure of being young again. It is quite wonderful to me, in such a cross-grained, hardening, and harsh world as ours, where she

can have contrived to keep so much of open, fresh, and kindly feeling. She is very national, and I am sure you have read her beautiful Irish stories. I think it is she who says, that Englishmen do not know how to make love. True enough! An Englishman seems to think he is conferring a favour, which the lady cannot too highly estimate, by the mere act of falling in love with her; but if any could inspire him with the amiable accomplishment of love-making, it would be one of her own Irish coquettes — a creature of rainbow lightning."

"They are very real. Does she draw from herself?"

"Perhaps from the pleasures of memory; for she is now half of one of those happy couples which make one understand a phrase somewhat difficult to comprehend, from so seldom witnessing it—domestic felicity."

"Nay," exclaimed Emily, laughing, "are you not an Englishwoman—a native of that happy island so celebrated for its

'Dear delights of hearth and home?'"

"I nevertheless think that the blessings of matrimony, like those of poverty, belong rather to philosophy than reality. Let us see—not

one woman in fifty marries the man she likes—and though it may be safest—why I could never understand—it is not pleasantest to begin with a little aversion. Let us just go through a day in married life. First, an early breakfast—for the husband is obliged to go out. On the miseries of early rising, like those of the country, I need not dwell: they are too well known. He reads the newspaper, and bolts his roll—she takes care that Miss Laura does not dirty her frock, and that Master Henry does not eat too much; he goes to his office or counting-house—she to market—for remember I am speaking of a good wife—some pounds of beef or mutton are to be ordered at the butcher's, the baker has charged an extra loaf, and the greengrocer has to be paid four shillings and twopence. On her return home, there is the housemaid to be scolded for not scouring the front bed-room—and the cook's conduct requires animadversion for yesterday's underdone veal. Perhaps, in the course of the morning, Mrs. Smith calls with an account of Mrs. Johnson's elegant new pelisse; and when Mons. le Mari returns to dinner, he suffers the full weight of the discontent one woman's new dress never fails to inspire in another. Evening comes, and

a matrimonial *tête-à-tête* is proverbial — ‘ what can I have to say to my wife, whom I see every day ? ’ Well, he reads some pamphlet or sleeps — she brings out the huge work-basket, doomed to contain and repair the devastations of seven small children — she has given up her maiden accomplishments — and, of course, a married woman has no time for music or reading. Perhaps, by way of agreeable conversation, she may say, ‘ My dear, I want some money : ’

“ Oh, sound of fear,
Unpleasing to a married ear ! ”

on which he wakes, and goes to bed. She follows ; and Mrs. I.’s pelisse is the foundation of that piece of exquisite eloquence, a curtain lecture. Now, who can deny that this is a faithful and exact picture of three hundred out of the three hundred and sixty-five days that constitute a year of married life.”

“ You are a connubial Cassandra,” said Emily.

“ Yes ; and like that ill-fated prototype of all who tell disagreeable truths, I shall get no lady, at least no young or unmarried one, to believe me. But I must now thank you for listening. Our carriage is announced ; and Mr. Sullivan, when his horses are concerned,

is like time and tide—he stays for no man—nor woman neither.”

A heavy, plain man took the lady away, very much as if she had been a parcel; and Emily could well believe he had written pamphlets on the currency and the corn-laws. He looked like a personification of the dryness of the one, and the dulness of the other.

Mrs. Smithson had by this time pretty well distributed her stock of conciliation and courtesy, and now recollected the existence of her sweet young friend. Divers introductions took place; and Emily heard a great deal of conversation, of which conceit was the canvass, while Flattery laid on the colours. Dry biscuits and drier^x sandwiches were handed round; and about twelve, Emily found herself in her own room, very tired, very dissatisfied, and very hungry. She had seen many who had long been the throned idols of her imagination, and her disappointment much resembled that of the princely lover of Cinderella, who, on questioning his porters if they had seen a robed and radiant beauty pass, learnt that their uncharmed eyes had only beheld a little dirty girl. She had fallen into the common error of supposing that the author must personify his works, and

that his conversation must be copy and compeer of his writings.

We forget that those writings are the productions of the mind's highest mood, when thoughts rise up in their perfect beauty, like the stars on the night; when feelings, untempted and unchecked, are the true, the good, and the pure; when vanity is sublimed into fame—that earthly hereafter—which, in taking the semblance of eternity, catches somewhat of its glory too; when imagination peoples its solitude with the great and the lovely, like those spiritual essences which obey but a midnight spell; when, if memory bring sorrow, it is softened and refined, or if hope speak of a future, it is one exalted and redeemed; when the enjoyment of creation is within him, and the consciousness of power is delight. In such hours are those pages written which will pass sea and land, winged with praise and pleasure.—over which eyes will glisten and hearts beat, when the hand that wrote is mouldered in the grave, and the head that conceived but a whitened skull.

Now society is a market-place, not a temple: there is the bargain to be made—the business to be followed; novelty, curiosity, amusement,

lull all of the strong passions to sleep, and, in their place, a thousand petty emotions hurry about, making up in noise what they want in importance. The society and solitude of an author's life realise the old fable of Castor and Pollux, who had an earthly and heavenly life between them. In society, all his more earthly nature preponderates; his mind, however different its stature and fashion may be, must wear the same dress as its neighbours.

There is nothing people are so much ashamed of as truth. It is a common observation, that those whose writings are most melancholy are often most lively in conversation. They are ashamed of their real nature; and it is a curious fact, but one which all experience owns, that people do not desire so much to appear better, as to appear different from what they really are. A part is to be played in company, and most desire that part to be an attractive one; but nothing is more mistaken than the means. A sincere wish to please is sure to be successful; but instead of wishing to please, we rather desire to display. The eye is restless to watch its opportunity—the lip feverish with some treasured phrase; we grow jealous from competition, and envious with apprehension; we think of our-

selves till we forget those very others for whose applause we are striving ; disappointment comes, as it often does, to even well-founded hopes—then how much more so to exaggerated expectation ? mortification succeeds, and vanity covers all as a garment, but a poisoned one, like the centaur's, envenoming and inflaming every wound.

Conversation is forced or languid, insipid or ill-natured ; and a celebrated author may retire, leaving his character behind, but taking with him the comfortable conviction that his mind has played false to its powers ; that he has despised the flatterer, but loved the flattery—at once ungrateful and exacting ; that he has praised himself—the worst of praise is that given in hopes of return ; and that he carries away with him a worldliness and selfishness, which, like the coming of the sandy waves of the desert, will, sooner or later, dry up and destroy all the fair gardens and the fresh springs in the Egypt of his imagination.

We talk of the encouragement now given to talents—of genius as the most universal passport to society. This may be good for the individual, but not so for literature. The anxious struggle—the loneliness of neglect—the con-

sciousness of merit—the resources which open to a mind flung back upon itself—will do more to stimulate exertion than praise or even profit. The flattered and followed author sees too soon the worthlessness and hollowness of the prize for which he contends. That desire, which is fame in solitude, and vanity in society, is like gazing at the stars with the naked eye, and through a telescope. In the latter, we see only a small bright point, whose nature is analysed, and whose distance is measured;—in the former, we go forth into the silent midnight, and our whole soul is filled with the mystery and beauty of those glorious and unattainable worlds. In a little time, imagination—that vivifying and redeeming principle in our nature—will be left only to the young. Look on all the great writers of the present day;—are they not living instances of the truth of this assertion? After all, literary life grows too like the actual one. Illusions merge in realities—imagination gives place to memory—one grows witty instead of romantic; and poetry ends in prose, all the world over.

CHAPTER XV.

We hope, plan, execute ; will it be vain ?
Or will the future be the past again ?

TRULY, a little love-making is a very pleasant thing, and Lady Adelaide found that it greatly enlivened the dulness of Lauriston House. Society does much towards forming a coquette, but here the credit was all Nature's own. Every one, they say, has a genius for something, and here was hers ; and it was not mere talent—it was genius. Gifted with no discernment into character, generally speaking, her tact was unerring when her favourite propensity was called into play. She saw at a glance into the recesses of the heart she wished to subdue—intuitively she entered into its tastes—and nothing could be more perfect than her assumption of the seeming best calculated to attract. To her this was more than ordinarily easy ; she had no original feelings of her own to alter or subdue, but took, like a picture,

her expression from the light in which she was placed. All she desired was admiration : like the green and blue bottles in the chemist's shop, she kept her lovers for shew, not use ; or, like the miser's gold, the mere pleasure of possession was all she desired. The idea that some return might be expected for the affection lavished upon her, never entered her head ; and it may be doubted whether she was more gratified by her maid's flattery or by her lover's. As to her marriage, that she took for granted must happen—but she left all its arrangements to her mother.

Many a mother might have feared one so handsome, so fascinating, as Edward Lorraine ; but she entertained no alarm about her daughter's heart, who could not well lose what she never had. He lost his, however ; and when, at the fortnight's end, he went on to Etheringham Castle, besides regrets, hopes, &c., he carried with him a secret wonder that he had made no formal declaration of rapture or despair, heaven or hell depending on one little monosyllable. Once he drew bridle beneath the old oak where they stopped the carriage ; but a moment of not very satisfactory meditation reminded him, that to ride back with a

proposal was somewhat premature, as, though the impression was strong on his mind that the lady was very sensible to his merits, yet it was difficult to decide on what grounds this impression rested.

It was this indecision that constituted the science of Adelaide's skill; hers was a mixed government of fear and hope—a look was to say every thing, which, on being interpreted, might mean nothing. Like a politic minister, her care was—not to commit herself; she left all to the imagination, but not till that imagination was properly excited: the signs of her preference, like the oracles of old, were always susceptible of two interpretations; and a rejected suitor would scarcely have known whether to curse her falsehood or his own vanity. But this was a finale she ever avoided: an offer, like the rock of adamant in Sinbad's voyages, finishes the attraction by destroying the vessel; and, like the Roman conqueror, she desired living captives to lead in her triumph—an ovation of *petits soins*, graceful flatteries, anxious looks, pretty anger, judicious pique, and vague hopes.

Edward Lorraine rode on, fully convinced that blue was the loveliest colour in the world

—it trimmed the lace *cornette*, so becoming to a slight invalid, which Adelaide wore at breakfast. A headach is a delicate compliment to a departing lover ; and Edward consoled himself by the future preference he was to obtain over every London rival. Her preference ! of what did he not feel capable to win it !—what would he not do before they again met !—conquer Greece, and lay the crown at her feet—become prime minister, and place at her disposal the whole list of pensions and places—start forth another Byron, and make her immortal in his love ; at least, he felt fully equal to them all, and his horse was spurred to a full gallop in the mere energy of intention. Ah ! love and youth are delightful things, before the one is chilled, and the other darkened by those after-days, each of which brings with it some dull or sad lesson !—when we learn, that, though disappointment is misery, fruition is but weariness ; and that happiness is like the statue of Isis, whose veil no mortal ever raised.

It was late in the evening before he found himself seated in his brother's favourite apartment in Etheringhame Castle—one of those delicious evenings when winter lingers round the hearth, but spring looks laughing in at

the window—and the room where they sat was especially suited to such a night. It was very large, and the black oak wainscoting was set in every variety of carvings, where the arms of the family were repeated in every size. Time had darkened, rather than destroyed, the colours of the painted ceiling: the subject was Aurora leading out the horses of the Sun, while the Hours scattered flowers around; the whole encircled by the once bright clouds, whose morning tints had long disappeared, but the figures were still distinct; and the eye gazed till they seemed rather some fantastic creation of its own than merely painting. A huge black screen, worked in gold, hid the door; and the fantastic gilded Chinese people that covered it, with their strange pagodas—their round heads like little gold balls, yet with an odd human likeness—the foreign palm-trees—the uncounted boats,—seemed like caricatures of humanity called up by some enchanter, and left there in a fit of mingled mirth and spleen. Placed in Gothic arches of carved oak, thousands of books were ranged around—many whose ponderous size and rich silver clasps told of past centuries; and between, placed on altar-like stands of variegated marble, were bronze busts of

those whose minds had made them gods among their kind.

Two peculiarly large windows, whose purple curtains were as yet undrawn, opened upon the lawn; one was in shade, for an acacia tree grew so close that its boughs touched the glass, and every note swept by the wind from its leaves was audible. The lawn was only separated from the park by a light iron rail; and the beds of rainbow-touched flowers, the clumps of blossoming shrubs, the profusion of early roses, were suddenly merged in the unbroken verdure, and the shadow of old and stately trees farther on, and seen more distinctly than usual at so late an hour, from the clear background of the cloudless west, now like an unbroken lake of amber. There was but a single lamp burning, and that was so placed that its light chiefly fell on a recess, so large that it was like a room of itself, and furnished in most opposite taste to the library.

A skilful painter had covered the walls with an Italian landscape: the light fell from the dome almost as upon reality, so actual was the bend of the cypresses, and so green the ivy, that half covered the broken columns in

the distance. In the middle was an ottoman, on which lay an ebony lute, inlaid with pearl flowers, and a cast of the loveliest hand that ever wandered in music over its strings. Three pictures hung on the wall: the first was of a most radiant beauty, the hair gathered up under a kind of emerald glory, quite away from the face, whose perfect outline was thus fully given to view. The fine throat and neck were bare, but the satin bodice was laced with jewels, and a superb bracelet was on the arm, which was raised with a gesture of command, suiting well with the brilliant style of her triumphant beauty. In the second, the hair, unbound, fell loose in a profusion of black ringlets, almost concealing the simple white drapery of the figure: the expression was wholly changed—a sweet but tremulous smile parted the lips—and the downcast eyes wore the dreaming looks of passionate thoughts, which feed but on themselves. In the third, a large white veil passed over the head; the hair was simply parted on a brow whose paleness was ghastly—the features were thin to emaciation, the mouth wan and fallen; while the colour of the closed eyes was only indicated by the long black lashes which lay upon the white and sunken

check. Beneath was written, "FRANCISCA
——, taken after death."

There was beauty, there was grandeur in the room; it spoke both of mind and of wealth; but the only part which had a look of comfort was that made bright by the cheerful blaze of the fire: a little table, on which stood two decanters, apparently filled from the two urns by Jove's throne—for one was dark, and the other bright; a basket of oranges, and another of walnuts, were set in the middle; and in an arm-chair on each side leant Lord Etheringham and his brother, too earnest in their conversation to mark an object beyond each other's face.

Edward Lorraine.—"I will urge my arguments against this wasteful seclusion no longer on your own account; you may neglect your talents and your toilette—leave your capacities and your curls equally uncultivated—forget your manners and your mirror—leave your coat to your tailor, and your neckcloth to fate—on your own account I urge you no longer; but I will urge you on that of others. With your wealth, your hereditary influence, your rank, how many paths of utility lie open before you! Your many advantages ought to be more than

an Egyptian bondage to stimulate you to exertion. Why, the very busts around reproach you: look on the three opposite:—was the debt of gratitude, which men are now paying, by imitation and honourable mention, to these, won by indolent seclusion?"

A sickly smile passed over Etheringhame's fine but wan features, as he said, "You are happy, really, Edward, in the encouragement of your illustrations—Bacon, Milton, and Sydney: the first adventured into public life but to shew his insufficiency to withstand its temptations; the second dragged on old age in fear, poverty, and obscurity; the third perished on a scaffold."

Edward Lorraine.—"I must give up my first: Bacon is one of the most humiliating examples of man's subservience to circumstances: he lived in an era of bribery and fraud; and he whose mind was so far in advance of his age, was, alas! in his actions but its copy. Much must be ascribed to his early education among corrupt and time-serving courtiers—the evil with which we are familiar seems scarce an evil: but even his example has a sort of hope in its warning to those who hope the best of their nature. How little

would any public man stoop now to such a degradation! But Milton and Sydney! look at the glorious old age of the one, when his thoughts, like the ravens of the prophet, brought him heavenly food, and he worked in pride and power at the noble legacy he bequeathed to his native tongue. Look at the glorious death of the other, sealing with his blood those principles of equity and liberty, whose spirit has since walked so mightily abroad, though even now but in its infancy! Never tell me but that these had a prophet's sympathy with centuries to come: I do believe that the power of making the future their present is one of the first gifts with which Providence endows a great man."

Lord Etheringham.—"But, even supposing I had the power, which I have not, and the inclination, which I have still less, of mixing in the feverish and hurried strife called the world, of what import is an individual?—I see thousands and thousands rushing to every goal to which human desires can tend—and what matters it if one individual loiter on the way? I see, too, thousands and thousands daily swept off, and their places filled up, leaving not a memory to say that they have been—

and again I ask, of what import is an individual?"

Edward Lorraine.—"Of none, if this living multitude were as the sands on the shore, where none is greater or less than the other; but when we see that one makes the destinies of many, and the tremendous influence a single mind often exercises, it behoves every man to try what his powers are for the general good. It is the effort of a single mind that has worked greatest changes. What are the events that, during the last five hundred years, have altered the whole face of things—changed the most our moral position? Let me enumerate some of the most striking. The discovery of America, of gunpowder, of printing,—the Reformation, the magnet,—all these were severally the work of an individual, and in each case a lonely, humble, unaided individual. Reginald, all these are stimulating examples. Instead of asking of what import is an individual, let us rather ask, what is there an individual may not do?"

Lord Etheringhame.—"And to what have all these discoveries tended? I see you glance round the room and smile. We have luxuries, I grant, of which our forefathers never dreamed;

but are we better or happier? It is true, where a former earl stepped upon rushes, I step upon a carpet; but comfort is a very conventional term; and what we have never had, at least we do not miss. We do not kill each other quite so much, but we cheat each other more; mortifications are more frequent than wants; and it does appear to me, that, in this change of rude into civilised life, we only exchange bodily evils for mental ones."

- *Edward Lorraine.* — " But success in one effort inclines us to hope for success in another: the same powers which have so well remedied the ills of the physical world, may, when so applied, equally remedy those of the moral world. Hitherto, it seems to me, we have attended more to the means than to the end — we have accumulated rather than enjoyed. All the energies of the mind were devoted to necessity; but our house is now built and furnished, our grounds cultivated, ourselves clothed: our natural condition thus ameliorated, now is the time to enjoy our artificial one. We have provided for our comforts; let us now attend to our happiness;—let each man sedulously nurture those faculties of pleasure which exist both for himself and others. It is

the mental world that now requires discovery and cultivation. And has not much been done even in this? How much has reason softened religious persecution and intolerance! Every day do not we become more and more convinced of the crime and cruelty of war? How little is the exercise of arbitrary authority endured! How much more precious is the life of man held! How much more do we acknowledge how intimately the good of others is connected with our own! How is the value of education confessed! Only look on the vast multitude who are at this moment being early imbued with right principles, accustomed to self-control, and fed with useful knowledge. Look at the youthful schools, filled with quiet, contented, and industrious children, now acquiring those first notions of right and wrong—those good and regular habits, which will influence all their after-life. Open the silver clasps of yon huge chronicle, and you will see it is not so long since human beings were burnt for a mere abstract opinion—not so long since the sword was appealed to in the court of justice, to decide on right and wrong, and its success held as God's own decision—not so long since a man looked forward to the battle as the only

arena of his struggle for fame and fortune, when education was locked up like a prisoner, and often like a state-prisoner, uselessly and vainly, in a monastery, and knowledge, like fixed air, too confined to be wholesome. Are not all these things changed for the better? and, encouraged by the past, Reason herself turns into hope. Reginald, I am young, and as yet undistinguished; but I am not thoughtless. I look forward to future years of honourable and useful exertion, for which early youth is not the season. We require some experience of our own, before we benefit by that of others; but my path is ever before me, and it is my entire conviction of its excellence that makes me wish my brother to share it with me."

Reginald gazed for a moment on the expression which lighted up the beautiful face of his brother, whom he loved as those love who have but one channel for the gathered waters of their affection; but his sympathy was as that of a mother who hears her eldest boy dwell on schemes in which she has no part beyond the interest that she takes in all that is his.

Lord Etheringham.—"You will succeed, Edward. Your energy will carry you over some obstacles—your enthusiasm will blind you to

others ; but I, who have neither spirits for the struggle, nor desire for the triumph, what have I to do at Olympus ? Edward, there are some sent into the world but as a sign and sorrow, whose consciousness of early death is ever with them—who shrink from efforts on which the grave must so soon close—who ask of books but to pass, not employ time—whose languid frame shrinks from exertion that would shake yet quicker from the glass the few lingering sands—who look back to their youthful feelings, not with regret for their freshness, but awe at their intensity. Such a one am I. I have lived too much in too few years. Feelings and passions have been to my mind like the wind that fans the flame into a brighter, clearer light, only to exhaust the material of the blaze. The oil which should have fed the altar for years has been burnt out in a single illumination. I went into the world ; and what were the fruits of my experience ? That I was too weak to resist temptation ; and, in yielding, I entailed on myself suffering even beyond the sin. I found that passion which had seemed too mighty for resistance, died of itself, and in spite of all my then efforts to keep it alive. I found that affection could pass away, even without a cause. I stood beside

the tomb of the young and beautiful, and felt it had been opened by me, and that by no wilful crime, but by a change of feeling, over which I had no control. My first welcome, as I rode into our avenue, was waved by the black plumes of my father's hearse. I have ever held it as an omen. The fever is in my veins, and the death-damps on my brow. Do not, Edward, talk to me of active life."

Lorraine looked on the Earl. The dark chestnut of his hair was mixed with white, the fine outline of his features was sunk, and the whole expression was so spiritless, so sad, that though Edward, with all the soothing tenderness of affection, did not believe his health impaired to the extent of danger, yet could not help owning to himself, how little was he fitted to be one of the gladiators in social or political life.

Truly the history of most lives may be soon comprehended under three heads—our follies, our faults, and our misfortunes. And this, after all, was the summary of Lord Etheringham's. His love was a fault, its termination a misfortune, and certainly his persisting in its regret was a folly. But there is nothing so easy as to be wise for others; a species of prodigality, by the by—for such wisdom is wholly wasted.

CHAPTER XVI.

"He has been the ruin of his country."—*Morning Post.*

"England owes every thing to her patriot minister."

Morning Herald.

WE now return to London and Miss Arundel again.

One evening, which, as usual, "had dragged its slow length along," on her and her hostess's return home, they were met with a request to adjourn to Mr. Delawarr's library; and there Lady Alicia grew almost animated with the pleasure of seeing her brother.

"Nothing at all has happened since you left us," said his sister.

"Nothing!" returned Edward Lorraine. "You mean every thing. Why, at this very moment I see your sleeves have assumed a different form. I left you in ringlets, and your hair is now braided. I have heard already that our richest duke has put a finish to the pleasures of hope; that seven new beauties have

come out; that a new avatar of Mrs. Siddons has appeared at Covent Garden, in the shape of her niece Fanny Kemble; and that we have refused to emancipate the Jews, lest it should convert them — and their conversion being a sign of the end of the world, it is a consummation devoutly to be deprecated.”

“ Oh, I have heard all this a hundred times : one hears things till one forgets them. But what have you been doing with yourself ? ”

“ Lording over the three elements ; — fire-king with my hearth blazing with pine boughs — water-king, with the lightest of boats on the roughest of rivers — and earth-king, with the valleys flying before me, thanks to the prettiest of chocolate-coloured coursers, — and am now come back to enlighten my club and enchant my partners with my adventures in Norway.”

“ Judicious, at least,” observed Mr. Delawarr. “ Nothing like laying the scene of one’s adventures in a distant land. I only hope you will have no rival Norseman to encounter. One great reason why our old travellers are so much more delightful than our modern ones is, that they needed not to verify their facts ; and I am afraid plain truth is like a plain face — not very attractive.”

“Nay, this is pre-supposing my Sir John Mandevilleism. I do not mean to be forgotten beside my adventures—I mean less to astonish than to interest. I shall tell any fair auditor not of the dark forest itself, but what my feelings were in the said forest.”

“I dare say,” said Lady Alicia, “you were very dull.”

“I shall be ignorant of that feeling at least for the next six weeks, during which period I intend to be your visitor.”

Edward did just glance towards where they were sitting; yet Emily could scarce help taking his speech as a personal compliment. Like poetry, gallantry must be born with you—an indescribable fascination, which, like the boundaries of wit and humour, may never be defined—seen rather than heard, and felt rather than understood.

“How very handsome Mr. Lorraine is!” said Emily to her pillow. Alas! the danger and decisiveness of a first impression.

When Mr. Delawarr, who was last at the breakfast-table, entered next morning, Edward rose, and threw down a paper he held amid a heap of others, and said, laughingly, “I have been deliberating, at the imminent danger of

my coffee, which, thanks to my meditation, is as cold as Queen Elizabeth, and walks as fancy free—at least from any fancy of mine,—I have been debating, whether, in emulation of the patriots of Rome, I should not arise and stab you to the heart with one of these knives—yonder columns having informed me that England; ‘that precious stone set in a silver sea,’ is on the brink of destruction, and that you are the political Thalaba of her peace and plenty; or, to speak in less embroidered language, that the present ministry are the destruction of the country, and that you are worst among the bad. I have shuddered at the excess of your guilt. Luckily, farther to ascertain the extent of your enormity, I took up another newspaper; and now I am only anxious to make my homages acceptable to the deliverer of his country, and express my admiration of the patriotic minister in sufficiently earnest terms.”

“I answer with Rosalind,” said Mr. Delawarr —

“ ‘ Which will you have—me or your pearl again ?
Neither of either—I reject both twain.’ ”

I am afraid I am neither quite worthy of the praise, nor, I trust, deserving of the censure ;—

and now some chocolate for consolation and change; for, to tell you the truth, indifference is as fabulous as invulnerability. There is no moral Styx; and in politics as in every thing else, censure is more bitter than praise is sweet."

"Thanks to my lately acquired bad habit of early rising," observed Edward,—"the which philosophers and physicians praise, because they know nothing about it—I have been for the last hour studying leading articles, advertisements, &c., till I am possessed of *matériel* enough for three weekly papers. Really people should put their names to advertisements, or at least allow them to be whispered about. There is an ingenuity, an originality, which makes one lament over so much unappreciated genius. I began one paragraph: it deplored the evils brought on the country by the passing of the Catholic bill—observed that the King's silence about it in his speech at the opening of Parliament sufficiently indicated his opinion, that Ireland was plunged into the deepest affliction. The depreciation of her produce was next insisted upon; and I found this exordium led to the information that Messrs. Standish and Co. had been enabled,

from the depressed state of the market, to lay in a large stock of Irish linen at unheard-of low prices.—My next is one of quite antiquarian research. It begins with an allusion to Lady Fanshawe's Memoirs, when Hart Street, St. Olave, was a fashionable part of London—is philosophical with reference to the many changes of fashion—that capricious divinity, as it poetically entitles her—and finishes by rejoicing to see Leicester Square recovering much of its former splendour, when princes were its inhabitants, and noblemen were its wayfarers; and this we are informed is in consequence of the crowds of carriages which assemble daily to inspect Newton's tremendous bargains of Gros de Naples and French gingham. And here is the worst of all, 'the music of the Mazurka, as danced by the Duke of Devonshire'—shades of Paul and Vestris, welcome your illustrious competitor, 'as danced by the Duke of Devonshire!'"

"I think," replied Mr. Delawarr, "the Duke might fairly bring his action for libel."

"What! place his refined exclusiveness, as the Duke of Wellington did his chivalrous sense of honour, for the judgment of twelve tallow-chandlers! Let them ask for redress if

the jury were their peers; but what sympathy could Mr. Higgins, the snuff-merchant, have with the exquisite dismay of the house of Cavendish at this exhibition of their head as a ballet master; or Mr. Wiggins, the butcher, know what was the Prince of Waterloo, the conqueror of Buonaparte's estimate of fame?

‘How can we reason but from what we know?’

and what could the retail individuals that constitute a jury know of these ‘fine fancies and high estimates?’”

“They were very respectable men, Edward,” observed Mr. Delawarr, with a decorous accent of reproof.

“Am I in the slightest degree detracting from their pretensions to our great national characteristic? A respectable man passes six days behind his counter, and the seventh in a one-horse chaise—imagines that his own and his country's constitution equally depend on roast-beef—pays his debts regularly, and gives away halfpence in charity. What can, such”——

“Hush! Really, Mr. Lorraine, these are, very dangerous sentiments for a young man to express.”

“ Oh, you laugh ; but what sympathy could these estimable individuals have with ideal honour and wounded feeling ? ”

“ On the one great principle, ‘ every thing has its price ; ’ damages are the *chevaux de frise* of our law.”

“ Well, well — but to turn from politics to literature : here I again lament over unappreciated genius. The unknown Chattertons of the columns display a flight of invention, a degree of talent, which often puts to shame the work whose merits they insinuate rather than announce. How completely to the calibre of the many —

‘ For gentle dulness ever loves a joke ’ —

is the following : — ‘ Our town was alarmed last night by the intelligence that Satan had arrived by the mail-coach.’ Lucifer’s arrival was alarming enough. Fortunately, it turned out to be only the harmless, nay even meritorious hero of Mr. Montgomery’s poem, who came with all sorts of moral reflections, instead of temptations.”

“ I was somewhat surprised,” replied Mr. Delawarr, “ to see my own name in one of the keys that now seem to follow a work as regu-

larly as its title-page to precede it. Of course, I read this setting forth of my thoughts, words, and actions; and was rather dismayed to find how little I knew of myself."

"It is certainly in the destiny of some individuals to be the idols of the circulating library. The Duchess of Devonshire, of whom I heard Lafayette say, when he shewed me her picture, that her loveliness was the most lovely of his remembrances—was the fortune of seven novels to my own reading knowledge. I cannot enumerate the many of which Lord Byron was hero, under the names of Lord Harold, Lord Lara, Count Monthermer, &c. His throne was then filled by a woman; and Lady Jersey has furnished the leading feature of thirty volumes. Brummel has figured on the stage three times (but he is quite an historical personage); and Lord and Lady Ellenborough were subjects for two sets of three volumes. We have been enlightened with divers slight sketches of others; but those I have named have hitherto been principals in the field of fiction."

"I often wonder at many that are omitted. Now, Lord Petersham I should have thought the *ideal* of a modern hero: Lady Dacre, dramatist, poet, could they not have made a

female Byron out of her? Can you, Edward, account for omissions like these?"

"Only on the principle, that there is a destiny in these things; but I do think a novelist will soon be as necessary a part of a modern establishment as the minstrel was in former times. The same feeling, which in the olden days gave a verse to a ballad, now gives a column to the Morning Post; only that the ball has taken place of the tournament, and white gloves are worn instead of steel gauntlets."

"I have heard my aunt say," observed Emily, "that Surr's Winter in London hastened the Duchess of Devonshire's death. She died of a broken heart."

"A most interesting fact to your aunt, who is, I believe, a most inveterate novel-reader; but one I rather doubt: people are not so easily written out of their lives—except by prescriptions."

"Most of the broken-heart cases I hear, put me in mind," rejoined Edward, "of our old friend Mrs. Lowe's story. A maiden lady of forty called on her one day on one of those sentimental errands to which maiden ladies of her age seem peculiarly addicted; and, after a deep sigh or two, said, 'I wished much, madam,

to see you, for you were the death of my unfortunate aunt.' Somewhat surprised at this sudden charge of murder, Mrs. Lowe naturally inquired into particulars. 'Your husband was engaged to my poor aunt: he deserted her for you, and she died of a broken heart.' 'At what age?' inquired her unconscionable rival. 'My poor aunt was fifty-two when she died.' 'At least,' said Mrs. Lowe, 'she took some time to consider of it.' For my part, I think hearts are very much like glasses—if they do not break with the first ring, they usually last a considerable time."

"What a charming old lady she was!" resumed Mr. Delawarr; "she had of age so little but its experience, and had lost of youth so little but its frivolity. I was once much delighted with an answer I heard her give to a young gentleman, whose silly irreverence of speech on sacred subjects richly deserved the rebuke it drew. 'Really, Mrs. Lowe, you have quite a masculine mind.' 'No, sir,' returned she, 'say a firm one.'"

"I can assure you, Miss Arundel," said Edward, "if you were to see her, you would quite anticipate the days of close caps, &c."

Emily smiled; but, somehow or other, she

had never thought of her roses and ringlets with more satisfaction than just now.

Some authors, in discussing love's divers places of vantage ground, are eloquent in praise of a dinner-table—others eulogise supper: for my part, I lean to the breakfast,—the complexion and the feelings are alike fresh—the cares, business, and sorrows of the day, have not yet merged in prudence and fatigue—the imaginativeness of the morning dream is yet floating on the mind—the courtesies of coffee and chocolate are more familiar than those of soup and fish. As they say in education, nothing like an early commencement—our first impressions are always most vivid, and the simplicity of the morning gives an idea of nature piquant from probable contrast. Perhaps one's rule of three for action might run thus: be naïve at breakfast, brilliant at dinner, but romantic at supper. The visions prepared for midnight should always be a little exalted: but if only one meal be at your choice, prefer the breakfast. *Ce n'est que le premier pas qui coûte*, is as true of sentiments as saints.

CHAPTER XVII.

All have opinions, wherefore may not I ?
I'll give a judgment—or at least I'll try.

“As idle as ever,” said Mr. Lushington, by way of a parting pleasantry. “In my time young men did not spend the morning on the sofa, reading trashy novels; they—” but the merits of our grandfathers were lost in the cough and heavy step with which the elderly gentleman descended the stairs, on his way to some other domicile, where he might vent another portion of his discontent. Certainly the breath of Mr. Lushington’s life was an east wind.

It is quite wonderful what privileges are accorded to single gentlemen of a certain age and a certain fortune,—these are the people who may be rude with more than impunity, even reward. Whether the old ladies, either for themselves or their daughters, hope it is not quite too late for these said single gentlemen

to marry, — whether the masculine part of the creation, with that attention to business, their great moral duty, calculate on pecuniary futurities, either in the shape of legacy or loan, we know not; but assuredly the *magna charta* of social life accords much to this privileged class.

Mr. Lushington was one of the number. As a child, he cried over his pap, his washing, and dressing, and himself to sleep—for the mere sake, as his nurse asserted, of plaguing her: at school, though neither tyrant nor tell-tale, he was hated—for his comrades always found his opinion opposite to theirs, a shadow thrown over their hopes, and a sneer affixed to their pleasures. At a very early age he went to India; lived for years in a remote station, where he was equally decided and disliked; and finally came home to adjust the balance of comfort between a hundred thousand pounds and a liver complaint. He made morning calls, for the express purpose of telling the ladies of the house how ill they looked after the fatigues of the night before, and dwelt emphatically on the evils of late hours and ruined complexions; — he dined out to insinuate the badness of the dinner, and take an opposite side in politics to

his host, — he was not the least particular as to principles, always supposing them to be contradictory ; — and he went to balls to ask young damsels who had no partners why they did not dance, and to make a third in every *tête-à-tête* that seemed interesting. In short, he was a modern incarnation of an Egyptian plague, sent as a judgment into society ; but then he was single, and single men may marry ; — but then he had a hundred thousand pounds, and he must die and leave them behind him. Vain hopes ! He had too large a stock of tormenting to confine it to any one individual, even though that individual were his wife ; and as to his money, when he did die, which he was a long time about, he left one of those wills which realise the classic fable of the golden apple thrown by the goddess of discord — for his heir not only spent the whole property in chancery, but some thousands of his own.

What a pity there is not some mental calomel ! for Mr. Lushington's equanimity was in a bilious fever with Edward Lorraine's appearance of luxurious enjoyment. Thrown upon a sofa, like a crimson cloud for colour and softness, — with just enough of air from the laurels and acacias of the square garden to fling back

the blind, scented as it passed with the rich flowers of the balcony,—while through the rooms floated that soft twilight which curtains can make even of noon. They were filled with graceful trifles for the fancy,—and a few noble pictures, an alabaster statue or two, a few exquisitely carved marble vases, to excite the imagination; while the vista ended in a conservatory, where the rose—a summer queen—held her rainbow court of jonquils, tulips, and the thousand-flowered and leaved geranium, but still supreme herself in beauty and sweetness.

Emily was seated at a harp, trying some new ballads; so there was just music enough to haunt the ear with sweet sounds, but not to distract the attention; while an occasional verse of gentle expression awoke, ever and anon, some pleasant or touching memory.

The ground, the table near Edward, were covered with novels enough to have realised even Gray's idea of Paradise. How unlucky some people are! Gray was just born an age too soon. How would he have luxuriated in the present day! Andrews' or Hookham's counter would have been "the crystal bar" which led to his garden of Eden, and the marble-covered tomes the Houries of his solitude.

“ Well,” said Mr. Morland, who had entered as Mr. Lushington departed, “ are you in ancient or modern times, aiding some heroine and her ringlets to escape from her prison in a mouldering castle, where her only companions are ghosts ; or braving, for love of her dark eyes, some ferocious banditti, whose muskets and mustaches are equally long ; or are you in ecstasies with some sweet child of simplicity, whose hair curls intuitively, and to whom the harp and piano, French and Italian, are accomplishments that come by nature ; or are you in those days of prudence and propriety, when the fair lady lost her lover by waltzing, and the matrimonial quarrel was rendered desperate by the disobedient wife going to a masquerade, to which her husband followed her in the disguise of a domino ? ”

“ Nay,” returned Edward ; “ I thought you were far too modern a person to even remember the avatar of Newman and Co.”

“ One does not easily forget the impressions of our youth ; and mine passed in a reign of female authorship. I have been convinced of the justice and expediency of the Salic law ever since. Mrs. Robinson, Mrs. Smith, and Mrs. Radcliffe ruled the Europe, Asia, and

Africa of the novel-writing world — America was not then discovered. Mrs. Robinson took sentiment, and was eloquent on the misfortunes of genius : by genius was meant a young man who was very poor and very handsome, and who complained to the moon for a *confidante* ; also, a beautiful young lady, whose affections were always placed contrary to the decrees of some cruel parent, and who had a noble contempt for money. Mrs. Smith took philosophy, was liberal and enlightened in her views, expatiated on how badly society was constituted, and, as a proof, her heroines—sweet, innocent creatures—were continually being run away with against their will ; and her hero had some fine-fangled theories, which always prevented his getting on in the world, till some distant relation left him heir to his wealth, or some rich heiress married him. Mrs. Radcliffe took terror, which, by the by, she never excited in me—I believe I did not read her romances when young enough. I always felt comfortable in the conviction that all the mysteries would be explained, if I did but go on. Schedoni, in all her works, is the only attempt at a character, and he is a fine Rembrandt ; but her heroes, who wander about on a fine evening,

playing on the flute, carry insipidity to its extremity; and as for the heroines, I grew so tired of their undeviating sweetness, that I hoped at last some of the dangers they encountered would fairly put an end to their terrors, troubles, and existence together."

Edward Lorraine. — "It is curious that the occasional pieces of poetry announced in the title-page, and interspersed through the volumes, should be so wretched; and yet her descriptions are touched with the finest poetical colouring; — her Italian woods and sunsets are really beautiful pictures."

Mr. Morland. — "Simply because, with fine poetical taste, she was not a poet; the spirit was not strong enough within to break through the set forms and conventional phrases which were then vouchers of the Muse's Almack's."

Edward Lorraine. — "Like the veins of a mine, the materials of fiction are soon worked out. To your three continents of sentiment, philosophy, and terror, what succeeded?"

Mr. Morland. — "A school of common sense and real life. Miss Edgeworth only wanted imagination to have secured her the very highest place in novel-writing. Humour gave animation to her pages — feeling never. Her remarks are

always sensible ; but we feel somewhat selfish in making them our code — and her heroines are so prudent, that we quite long for them to commit some little indiscretion. She is an English and dramatic Rochefoucault, developing her axioms by actions ; and with, moreover, a point of attack before her. French morality and French sentiment were the alpha and omega of her literary warfare.”

Edward Lorraine. — “ Surely Miss Burney’s heroines get into scrapes enough to satisfy you. To tell you the truth—I hope there is not even a picture of an aunt or grandmother near—I never liked Miss Burney. Her pages are a succession of caricatures—her lovely Miss Anvilles and angelic Miss Beverleys pretty wax dolls—and her Lord Orvilles and Mortimer Delvilles just captivating court-suits. Camilla is the only character with any interest ; and even that is lost in her preference of that most prudent young gentleman, Edgar Mandlebert. I never forgive a girl bad taste in her lover. What must she be, when even her *idéal* of excellence is mean ? ”

Mr. Morland. — “ I prefer Miss Austen’s : they are the truest pictures of country life, whose little schemes, hopes, scandals, &c. are

detected with a woman's tact, and told with a woman's vivacity."

Edvard Lorraine.—"Yes, they are amusing to a degree; but her pen is like a pair of skates—it glides over the surface; you seek in vain for any deep insight into human thought or human feeling. *Pride and Prejudice* is her best work; but I cannot forgive Elizabeth for her independence, which, in a woman, is impertinence; and Mr. Darcie is just a stiff family portrait, come down from its frame to be condescending.* What you said of Miss Edgeworth appears to me to be the great characteristic of the writers of that time—an utter want of imagination, and of that deep feeling born of it and nursed by it. Various and entertaining personages passed over the stage; but none of them wore that window in their hearts it is the part of the philosopher or poet to discover."

Mr. Morland.—"Who was it that used to thank the gods—first, that he was born a man—and secondly, either a Grecian or a Roman—I have forgotten which—and no great matter either. Now, I am thankful that I am born in

* I had not read *Persuasion* when the above was written. *Persuasion*, in my very humble opinion, is one of the most touching and beautiful tales in our language.

the same age with Sir Walter Scott. It is quite exhilarating to think that life has had so much enjoyment as I owe to him : he is the Columbus that has discovered our America of literature. Think not only of his works themselves, but of their effects. How much he has destroyed and discovered ! How much mental gold he has distributed ! What a new spirit he has created ! He is the Hercules who has cleared off the dragons and giants, and the Prometheus who has bequeathed a legacy of living fire."

Edward Lorraine. — "When opinions have lost the support of the grounds on which they were originally formed, they become prejudices ; but in proportion as they lose their foundation, they tighten their hold ; for though a man may give up his opinion, he holds to his prejudice as a drowning wretch who has lost his boat grasps his oar. Habit holds over the mind more than a despotic power ; and hence I understand how it is possible for people to be blind to the great changes working around them. It is half curious, half ludicrous, to hear persons—ay, and critics too—talk of a novel as a pleasant hour's amusement, and exhort the author gravely to turn his talents to higher account, wholly unconscious of the truth, that the novel

is now the very highest effort—the popular vehicle for thought, feeling, and observation—the one used by our first-rate writers. Who, that reflects at all, can deny, that the novel is the literary Aaron's rod that is rapidly swallowing all the rest. It has supplied the place of the drama—it has merged in its pages pamphlets, essays, and satires. Have we a theory—it is developed by means of a character; an opinion—it is set forth in dialogue; and satire is personified in a chapter, not a scene. Poetry has survived somewhat longer, but is rapidly following the fate of its fellows. Descriptions, similes, pathos, are to be found in the prose page; and rhythm is becoming more and more an encumbrance rather than a recommendation. I do believe, in a little time, lyrical will be the only form of poetry retained. Now, query, are we gainers or losers?"

Mr. Morland. — "Gainers, certainly. It matters little what form talent takes, provided it is a popular one. But, even now, a new spirit, in the shape of a new writer, is rising; and the author of *Pelham* has again enlarged the boundaries, and poured fresh life into the novel. Many clever works have appeared within the last few years; but none

sufficiently vigorous or sufficiently original to create their own taste, or give their tone to the time ; and this is what this author is doing, and will do. Pelham took up a ground quite untouched. There had been fashionable novels, and of real life, so called ; but they wanted either knowledge, or talent to give that knowledge likeness. But the author of Pelham was the first who said, such and such beings exist—such and such principles are now acted upon—and out of such will I constitute my hero. Nothing proves the life thrown into the picture so much as the offence it gave—so many respectable individuals took the hero's coxcombry as a personal affront."

Edward Lorraine.—" I think these works go very far to support our theory of the novel—that it is like the Roman empire, sweeping all under its dominion. Pelham is the light satire of Horace—Paul Clifford the severer page of Juvenal—the Disowned has the romantic and touching beauty of poetry—while Devereux is rather the product of the philosopher and the metaphysician."

Mr. Morland.—" I should judge—though it seems almost a paradox to say so of one whose pages are mostly so witty and so worldly—

that the original frame of his mind was imaginative even to romance, and that his mood would savour more of melancholy than mirth. Poetry has a large part in his composition: look at his young painter. Could any writer but one who has had such dreams himself have imagined a dream of fame so engrossing? There is something to me inexpressibly touching in that young artist's history: he is poor, low-born, with neither grace of person nor of manner; he is not even successful in his pursuit; he is the victim, not the priest of his altar; yet how we enter into his hopes! how convinced we feel of his power! and the author's great skill is shewn in making his enthusiasm a pledge for his genius. No one could draw such a character who had not, at some time or other, numbered fame and futurity among his own visions. Again, I know no one who has painted love so poetically—and poetry is love's truth; he has painted its highest nature, removed from the common-places of life, but ready for its cares—a hidden spring, whose presence is only indicated by the freshness of the verdure around; and the more spiritualised, self-devoted, and entire, in proportion as it is kept apart from the dividing and corrupting effect of the world. The love

he depicts is especially that of the naturally melancholy and passionate, who exalt and refine their feelings even to themselves."

Edward Lorraine.—"I am not sure whether even the wittiest—the most seemingly gay passages, do not rather favour your view; the satire is that of sarcasm, as if society had forced knowledge upon him, and the knowledge was bitter, and the very keenness of the perception gave point to the expression; indeed, in most of his observations, I have been struck with their truth even before their wit."

Mr. Morland.—"I know no writer who has united so much philosophy with so much imagination; hence his views will have such effect on his time. He uses his power to make us feel—chiefly to make us think; it is the consequences he draws from his creations which force reflection to succeed to interest. Read his pages dispassionately, after the first vivid effect of the story is departed, and you will be surprised to observe the vast mass of moral investigation and truth which they contain. His very poetry is full of this spirit; witness a simile, exquisite for its turn and thought—

'Autumn, which, like ambition, gilds ere it withers.'"

"Is he handsome?" asked Emily.

"Nay," returned Lorraine, "do not ask me.

I always consider one of my own sex as a non-entity or a rival: in the first quality he excites my indifference—in the second, my hatred. I dislike that any one should attract a woman's attention enough for her to ask any questions about him."

A woman always, whether she shews it or not, takes a general assertion to herself, not from vanity, but from the intense individuality of her nature; and Emily found something satisfactory even in having no answer to her question.

Mr. Morland.—"But what induces you to have so many books open at once?"

Edward Lorraine.—"Because I have a Plutarchian taste, and love parallels. Nothing delights me more than to turn from a subject in one author, to see how differently it is treated in another; for no two agree even about the same thing."

Mr. Morland.—"Because no one sees things exactly as they are, but as varied and modified by their own method of viewing. Bid a botanist and a poet describe a rose-tree—the one will dwell upon its roots, fibres, petals, &c., and his

abstract view will be of its medicinal properties; the poet will dwell upon its beauty, and associate it with the ideas of love and summer, or catch somewhat of melancholy from its futurity of fading—no fear of want of variety. But in what book had you taken refuge from Mr. Lushington?"

Edward Lorraine.—"In a favourite—the second part of Vivian Grey. I think it one of the most singular I have read. Its chief characteristic is the most uncurbed imagination. But his humour is grotesque caricature, and his satire personality; he strikes me as being naturally ill-natured; and circumstances have thrown in his way people and things, which he seems to think it a pity to lose, but which it is against the bent of his talents to use; he should have been born a German. What a fine and most original novel might be written which took for its *matériel* the mystics and metaphysics of our neighbours, wrought up with a tone of the supernatural, yet bringing all to bear on our actual and passing existence!"

Mr. Morland.—"Yes, but Mr. D'Israeli must be banished first. I should say he is one whose

greatest misfortune is that he was born in London, and in the congregating habits of the present day. His is a mind that requires to be thrown upon and within its own resources. To go back to the days of the *Spectator*, and illustrate my meaning by an allegory:—the two female figures that now wait to guide Hercules through the world are Philosophy and Vanity, and, according as one or other is his guide, he is benefited or injured: he who goes conducted by Philosophy, goes to think of others, and is benefited—he who is led by Vanity into society, goes to think of himself, and is injured.”

Edward Lorraine.—“How philosophical we should be—what moral truths we should discover, could we forget ourselves, and lose our identity in our examination!” •

Mr. Morland.—“Not so neither; ourselves must still be our rule for others: philosophy, like charity, begins at home; but also, like charity, I should wish it to extend, and become the more beneficial the more it expands. But *à propos* to benevolence, and ‘all that sort of thing,’ is this one of your favourite authors?” taking up a volume of Tremain.

Edward Lorraine.—“ No, I consider Mr. Warde most happy in his common-places; he flings himself on the current, and there he floats. His popularity shews the force of habit; and we like his copy-book morality on the same principle that Eton boys are said to like mutton—because we are used to it. There is always a certain capital of opinion to which men deem it proper to subscribe—our education from the first cultivates credulity—we are taught to agree, not to examine, and our judgment is formed long before our comprehension. We must either have property of our own, or else credit; and all experience shews the leaning most have towards the latter. Hence it is that so much is taken for granted. Mr. Warde has shewn great tact in embodying these generalities in his pages; and we are little disposed to deny his truths, we have heard them so often. Add to this a most elegant style, an appropriation of popular and passing events, and have we not the secret of Mr. Warde’s success?”

“ I must,” returned Mr. Morland, rising, “ bid you good-by; we have been quite clever enough for one morning—I shall really not have an idea left. Well, opinions of one’s own are very pleasant: I am always inclined to

apply to my judgment the proverb which the Spaniard applies to his home—

‘My home, my home! though thou’rt but small,
Thou art to me the Escorial.’ ”

Always be as witty as you can with your parting bow—your last speech is the one remembered.)

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ Spirit of Love ! soon thy rose-plumes wear
The weight and the sully of canker and care ;
Falsehood is round thee—Hope leads thee on,
Till every hue from thy pinion is gone ;
But one bright moment is all thine own,
The one ere thy visible presence is known.
When, like the wind of the south, thy power,
Sunning the heavens, sweetening the flower,
Is felt, but not seen, thou art soft and calm
As the sleep of a child—the dewfall of balm.
Fear has not darkened thee—Hope has made
The blossom expand, it but opens to fade.
Nothing is known of those wearing fears
Which will shadow the light of thy after-years.
Then thou art bliss :—but once throw by
The veil which shrouds thy divinity,
Stand confessed, and thy quiet is fled ;
Wild flashes of rapture may come instead,
But pain will be with them. What may restore
The gentle happiness known before ? ”

The Improvisatrice.

THERE was a considerable change in the tone of Emily's epistles. Pleasures were not con-

sidered quite so insipid — nor was our young lady quite so philosophical as she had been ; she owned, that now town was full it was very delightful ; and mentioned casually, in a post-script, that Mr. Lorraine was a great acquisition to their circle.

No one can deny Lady Charlotte Bury's assertion, that no well-regulated young female will ever indulge in a species of amusement so improper as flirtation ; but it must be admitted, that having a pleasant partner is preferable to not dancing, and that a little *persiflage*, a little raillery, a little flattery, go far to make a partner pleasant. We are afraid these three parts only want a fourth — sentiment — to make up what is called flirtation, — at least, the Misses Fergusson pronounced that Miss Arundel flirted shamefully with Mr. Lorraine. This was said one evening when, after having waltzed — animated at once by pleasure and a desire to please — with the grace of a Greek nymph (or, at least, our idea of one) and the ear of a nightingale (we take it for granted that a nightingale's ear for time must be exquisite) — she sat down with Edward on a vacant window-seat.

“ Love,” thought Lady Mandeville to herself,

“is said to spring from beauty. I am rather inclined to reverse the genealogy. I pique myself upon my penetration, and will never trust it again, if my young friend is not improving her complexion, and losing her heart somewhat rapidly ; — well, I think her to-night a most lovely creature.”

Lady Mandeville remembered how different she looked seated by Lady Alicia at her first ball ; but to-night

The heart's delight did, like a radiant lamp,
Light the sweet temple of her face.

She was placed so that her delicately cut features were seen in profile ; the head a little thrown back, a little turned away — that half withdrawing attitude so graceful and so feminine ; the mouth half opened, as if listening with such unconscious intenseness that the breath was rather inhaled than drawn — its least sound suppressed ; the beautiful crimson of excitement glowed on the cheek, that rich passionate colour it can know but once — a thousand blushes gathered into one aurora ; her eyes were entirely veiled by the long lashes, not from intention, but impulse, intuitively aware of his every glance, — she herself knew not that to

look into his face was impossible. Ah! there is no look so suspicious as a downcast one.

Emily was now in the happiest period of love — perhaps its only happy one; she felt a keener sense of enjoyment, a pleasure in trifles, a reliance on the present; her step was more buoyant, her laugh more glad; she felt a desire to be kind to all around, and her nature seemed all gaiety but for its sweetness.

“Love’s first steps are upon the rose,” says the proverb—“its second finds the thorn.” Like the maiden of the fairy tale, we destroy our spell when we open it to examine in what characters it is written. In its ignorance is its happiness; there is none of the anxiety that is the fever of hope—no fears, for there is no calculation—no selfishness, for it asks for nothing—no disappointment, for nothing is expected: it is like the deep quiet enjoyment of basking in the bright sunshine, without thinking of either how the glad warmth will ripen our fruits and flowers, or how the dark clouds in the distance forebode a storm.

I doubt whether this morning twilight of the affections has the same extent of duration and influence in man that it has in woman; the necessity of exertion for attainment has been

early inculcated upon him—he knows, that if he would win, he must woo—and his imagination acts chiefly as a stimulus. But a woman's is of a more passive kind; she has no motive for analysing feelings whose future rests not with herself: more imaginative from early sedentary habits, she is content to dream on, and some chance reveals to herself the secret she would never have learnt from self-investigation. Imbued with all the timidity, exalted by all the romance of a first attachment, never did a girl yet calculate on making what is called a conquest of the man she loves. A conquest is the resource of weariness—the consolation of disappointment—a second world of vanity and ambition, sighed for like Alexander's, but not till we have wasted and destroyed the heart's first sweet world of early love.

Let Lord Byron say what he will of bread and butter, girlhood is a beautiful season, and its love—its warm, uncalculating, devoted love—so exaggerating in its simplicity—so keen from its freshness—is the very poetry of attachment: after-years have nothing like it. To know that the love which once seemed eternal can have an end, destroys its immor-

talities; and, thus brought to a level with the beginnings and endings—the chances and changes of life's common-place employments and pleasures—and, alas! from the sublime to the ridiculous there is but a step—our divinity turns out an idol—we are grown too wise, too worldly, for our former faith—and we laugh at what we wept before: such laughter is more bitter—a thousand times more bitter—than tears.

Emily was in the very first of the golden age of unconscious enjoyment—a period which endures longer in unrequited love than any other; the observance and display of another's feelings do not then assist to enlighten us on our own.

Lorraine's imagination was entirely engrossed by Adelaide Lorimer. He had first seen her in a situation a little out of the common routine of introduction; she was quite beautiful enough to make a divinity of—and her grace and refinement were admirable in the way of contrast to the prettiness and simplicity of which he had just been thoroughly tired in Norway. Now it is an admitted fact in moral—or, we should say, sentimental—philosophy, that one attachment precludes another—and that to be sensible

of the attractions of one lady, is to be blind to those of the rest. Edward thought Miss Arundel "a great acquisition to their circle," and a very pretty sweet creature; but he never even thought of falling in love with her, and certainly she did not think of it either. Thus, matters stood at present—very sufficient to give a shadowy softness to her eyes, and brilliancy to her blush. And yet the *camellia japonicas* (those delicate white flowers, which seemed as if carved in ivory by some sculptor whose inspiration has been love till all that is beautiful is to him something sacred), and the geraniums in the window behind, could have witnessed that their conversation had been carried on in a tone of exclusive gaiety, and that the only arrows flung round were those of laughing sarcasm.

Strangers and friends had been alike passed in gay review—strangers, for their dress and manners; and friends—our friends always share the worst—to dress and manners added tempers, opinions, and habits—their whole internal and external economy. It is a wise law of nature, that we only hear at second-hand what is said of us, when, at least, we can comfort ourselves with disbelief. His Satanic

majesty did not know how to tempt Job ; instead of making him hear his friends talk to him—though that was bad enough—he should have made him hear them talk of him ; and if that did not drive him out of all patience, I know not what would.”

“ Nothing,” at length observed Emily, “ strikes me so much as the little appearance of enjoyment there is in any present—our faces, like our summers, want sunshine ; my uncle would quote Froissart, who says of our ancestors, ‘ the English, after their fashion, *s’amusent moult tristement.*’ Look at the quadrille opposite—it boasts not a single smile ; I am inclined to ask, with some foreigner, ‘ Are these people enjoying themselves ? ’ ”

“ We must first make,” replied Edward, “ due allowance for climate and constitution—we must make another for fashion : we live in an age of re-action ; the style of loud talking, laughing, or what was termed dashing, lies in the tomb of the Duchess of Gordon. We are in the other extreme—and I answer your question by another : Do you mean to affront me, by supposing I could enjoy myself ? What pitiable ignorance of pleasure, on my part, does the question insinuate ! ”

"I am, then, to imagine, that the highest style of fashion is, like that of ancient art, the beauty of repose? You account for the indifference of the gentlemen—how do you account for the gravity of the young ladies?"

"You speak as if you considered a ball matter of pleasure, not business! Do you imagine a girl goes through her first season in London with the view of amusing herself? Heavens! she has no time to waste in any such folly. The first campaign is conquest and hope—the second, conquest and fear—the third, conquest and despair. A ball-room is merely—'Arithmetic and the use of figures taught here.' A young lady in a quadrille might answer, like a merchant in his counting-house, 'I am too busy to laugh—I am making my calculations.'"

"*La nation boutiquière*," laughed Emily.

"Ah, good!" exclaimed Lorraine. "Do look how sedulously those two young ladies have made room for that thin, bilious-looking, elderly gentleman, to hear more conveniently Malibran's last song."

"He sat by me at dinner the other day. Do you know, I am quite interested in him—I pity his situation so much! The conversation

took what you would call a most English strain, about domestic felicity; and he spoke in a tone of such strong personal feeling of the cruel opposition of circumstance to affection! I have arranged his little romance in my own mind. Has he not for years ‘dragged at each remove the lengthened chain’ of an early and vain attachment—too poor to marry?”

“Nothing like the *couleur de rose* of the imagination—I wish it could be condensed into curtains for my dressing-room. This gentleman, who has so excited your sympathy as too poor to marry, has only about ten thousand a-year; but, as he once observed, wives and servants are so expensive now-a-days, they require almost as much as one’s self.”

“Who is that gentleman who has just entered, with such an air of captivating condescension? He always gives me the idea of having stepped out of the Spectator—one of the Cleontes and Orlandos of other days, whose very bow annihilated one’s peace of mind. I have a vision of him, with lace ruffles, and his mistress’s portrait on his snuff-box—keeping a portfolio of *billets doux*, and talking of the last sweet creature that died for him, with a ‘Well, it was really too cruel!’”

“ You are right—Mr. Clanricarde is born too late ; the reputation of a conqueror, whether of hearts or kingdoms, is now philosophically demonstrated to be worthless. Utility is fast annihilating the empire of the sigh or the sword : a hero is pronounced to be dangerous, or, worse, useless—and Alexanders and Richelieus are equally out of keeping with our time. Mr. Clanricarde’s theory of sentiment is rather original : he says he quite agrees with Montesquieu’s doctrine of the influence of climate ; he therefore argues that this external effect must be counteracted by an internal one, and takes up an attachment as the best resource against the fogs, rains, and snows of our island. He changes his mistresses with the weather : in sunshine, by way of contrast, he devotes himself to some languid beauty—in gloom, to some piquante coquette. I rallied him the other day on his homage this June to the lively and witty Miss Fortescue. ‘ Yes, summer is setting in with its usual severity,’ replied he—‘ one must have a resource.’ ”

“ He is a practical reproach to our barometer,” rejoined Emily : “ but do you not think the inconvenience of such rainy seasons

is more than compensated by the pleasure of grumbling at them?"

"Our national safety-valve: a Frenchman throws his discontent into an epigram, and is happy—an Englishman vents his on the weather, and is satisfied. Heaven help our minister through a fine summer! it would inevitably cost him his place; for our English grumbling is equally distributed between the weather and politics, and the case would be desperate when confined to the last."

"Are not the Misses M'Leod dressed beautifully to-night?"

"We agree. Ah, Miss Arundel, what a duty it is in a woman to dress well! Alas, that a duty so important should ever be neglected! Dress ought to be part of female education; her eye for colouring, her taste for drapery, should be cultivated by intense study. Let her approach the mirror as she would her harp or her grammar, aware that she has a task before her, whose fulfilment, not whose fulfilling, is matter of vanity. Above all, let her eschew the impertinence of invention; let her leave genius to her milliner. In schools, there are the drawing, French, and dancing

days; there should also be dressing days. From sandal to ringlet should undergo strict investigation; and a prize should be given to the best dressed. We should not then have our eyesight affronted by yellows and pinks, greens and blues, mingled together; we should be spared the rigidity of form too often attendant on a new dress; and no longer behold shawls hung on shoulders as if they were two pegs in a passage."

"A frivolous employment you find, truly, for our sex!"

"A frivolous employment! This comes of well-sounding morality shining in a sentence. Frivolous in an education devoted to attraction! No sonata will do so much execution as your aërial *crêpe* over delicate satin; and your cadences never produce half the effect of your curls."

"But consider the time your system would require."

"But consider the time really and truly given to the toilette. My system would require but half—for it would be judiciously employed."

"You gentlemen have strange notions on these subjects; you have some visionary fancy

of a heroine all white muslin and simplicity, whose ringlets never come out of curl, and who puts a few natural flowers, which make a point of not fading, in her hair."

"I have a particular antipathy to white muslin; and I think natural flowers like natural pleasures—their beauty is soon past. No; I prefer a noble confidence in your milliner, using your own taste only in selection; and also that confidential intercourse between yourself and your clothes as if you were accustomed to each other. Do not take up your boa as if it were the rope with which you meant to hang yourself; nor wrap your shawl round you as if it were your shroud. But you, Miss Arundel, understand well what I mean."

There was a very graceful emphasis on the *you*; but Emily certainly blushed deeper than the occasion required. For the first time, Lady Alicia was petitioned to keep the carriage waiting half an hour for "one more waltz;" and "Oh, such a delightful ball, sir!" was Emily's account to Mr. Delawarr the next morning at breakfast.

If, as a pretty little French woman once observed, a young lady's delight in a ball is

not always *raisonnable*, at least she always has *quelque raison*.

I own that life is very wearisome—that we are most miserable creatures—that we go on through disappointments, cares, and sorrows, enough for a dozen of poems; still, it has pleasant passages—for example, when one is young, pretty, and a little in love. What a pity that we cannot remain at fifteen and five and twenty! Or, second thoughts are best—I dare-say then we should sink under the *ennui* of enjoyment, or be obliged to commit suicide in self-defence.

It is a fact, as melancholy for the historian as it is true, that though balls are very important events in a young lady's career, there is exceedingly little to be said about them:—they are pleasures all on the same pattern,—the history of one is the history of all. You dress with a square glass before you, and a long glass behind you; your hair trusts to its own brown or black attractions, either curled or braided,—or you put on a wreath, a bunch of flowers, or a pearl *bandeau*; your dress is gauze, crape, lace, or muslin, either white, pink, blue, or yellow; you shower, like April, an odorous rain on your handkerchief; you

put on your shawl, and step into the carriage; you stop in some street or square; your footman raps as long as he can; you are some time going up stairs; you hear your name, or something like it, leading the way before you. As many drawing-rooms are thrown open as the house will allow,—they are lighted with lamps or wax lights; there is a certain quantity of china, and a certain number of exotics; also a gay-looking crowd, from which the hostess emerges, and declares she is very glad to see you. You pass on; you sit a little while on a sofa; a tall or a short gentleman asks you to dance,—to this you reply, that you will be very happy; you take his arm and walk to the quadrille or waltz; a succession of partners. Then comes supper: you have a small piece of fowl, and a thin slice of ham, perhaps some jelly or a few grapes,—a glass of white wine, or *ponche à la romaine*. Your partners have asked you if you have been to the Opera; in return, you question them if they have been to the Park. Perhaps a remark is hazarded on Miss Fanny Kemble. If you are a step more intimate, a few disparaging observations are made on the entertainment and the guests. Some cavalier hands you down stairs; you re-

cloak and re-enter the carriage, with the comfortable reflection, that as you have been seen at Mrs. So-and-so's ball, Mrs. Such-a-one may ask you to hers.

Now, is not this a true page in the annals of dancing? A little sentiment in the case alters the whole affair. Emily's day of philosophical reflection in a ball-room was either past or to come. There are many odd things in society; but its amusements are the oddest of all. Take any crowded party you will, and I doubt if there are ten persons in the room who are really pleased. To do as others do, is the mania of the day. I will tell you a story.

Once upon a time a lady died much regretted; for she was as kind-hearted an individual as ever gave birth-day presents in her life, or left legacies at her death. When they heard the intelligence, the whole of a married daughter's family were in great distress,—the mother cried bitterly, so did her two eldest daughters, as fitting and proper to do. The youngest child of all, a little creature who could not in the least recollect its grandmother, nevertheless retired into a corner, and threw its pinafore over its face. "Poor dear feeling little creature!" said the nurse, "don't you cry too." "I'm

not crying," replied the child; "I only pretend."

Regret and enjoyment are much the same; people are like the child,—they only pretend.

CHAPTER XIX.

“ I trust I may be permitted to have an opinion of my own.”

Commonplace in Domestic Dialogue.

“ He who judges of other days by the feelings of his own, is like one who would adapt a Polar dress to the climate of the Tropics.”

JAMES'S History of Chivalry.

“ WERE you entertained at the play last night?” said Lady Mandeville, who, apart from the other callers, had formed a little circle of Emily, Lorraine, and Mr. Morland.

Edward Lorraine. — “ Allow me to answer for you ; Miss Arundel was delighted, for she was superlatively miserable—and the pleasure of a tragedy is to be measured by its sorrow.”

Emily. — “ I never saw a tragedy before, and, to use one of Mr. Lorraine's own expressions, novelty is the secret of enjoyment ; and I liked Miss Fanny Kemble so much.”

Mr. Morland. — “ Excepting as matter of pedigree, our ancestors are exceedingly in the

way: we go to see a young, rising, inexperienced girl, and we keep talking about Mrs. Siddons. I think it just a debatable point, whether Miss Kemble be most indebted to the attraction flung over her by memories of other days, or injured by the comparison."

Emily.—"I cannot offer an opinion, but I must express my delight; there is something in her voice that fills my eyes with tears, even before I know the sense; and her face is to my taste beautiful,—the finely arched and expressive brow, and the dark, passionate eyes,—what a world of thought and feeling lie in their shadowy depths! She gave to me, at least, an interest in Juliet I never felt before."

Lady Mandeville.—"I agree with you in not placing Juliet among my favourite creations of Shakespeare; her love is too sudden, too openly avowed—it is merely taking a fancy to the first handsome young man she sees; even to her lover she has to say,

'If thou thinkest I am too quickly won.'

Now, among all Shakespeare's heroines, give me Viola. I have always formed a beautiful vision of the lonely and enthusiastic Italian, nursing a wild dream of the noble duke, whose

perfections had been the subject of their fire-side talk —

‘ I have heard my father name him ’ —

cherishing the vision of her girlhood in silence and hopelessness. Viola seems to me the very poetry of love. Satisfactory as is the ending of *Twelfth Night*, I always feel a fanciful anxiety for the fate of her who is henceforth to be

‘ Orsino’s mistress, and his fancy’s queen.’

I have a great idea of a lover having some trouble,—it is the effort we make to attain an object that teaches us its value.”

Edward Lorraine. — “ I think you judge Juliet unfairly, because you judge her by rules to which she is not amenable—by those of our present time. You forget how differently love affairs are now arranged to what they were in the time of the fair Veronese. It was an age when love lived, as Byron says, more in the eyes than the heart. A kind wind blew back a veil, and shewed a rose-touched cheek; or a dark eye flashed over a blind—this was enough to make an enamoured youth desperate. The lady herself just glanced over her lattice, and a stately step, or a well-mounted steed, hence-

forth haunted her dreams. The only communication between lovers was the handing the holy water in the cathedral, a guitar softly touched at night, or perhaps the rare occurrence of meeting at a festival. In all the old novelists and poets, love at first sight is a common event, because it was such in actual life. Our modern easiness of manners, and freedom of intercourse, develop the same feeling, though in a different manner,—we no longer lose our hearts so suddenly, because there is no necessity for such haste; we talk of answering tastes, our ancestors thought of answering eyes,—we require a certain number of quadrilles, and a certain quantity of conversation, before the young pair can be supposed to form an attachment; but allow me to say, I do not see why it is so much more rational to talk than to look oneself into love. No: judge Juliet according to the manners of a time of masks, veils, serenades, and seclusion, and you will find the picture worked out in colours as delicate as they are natural.”

The defence of one woman is a man's best flattery to the whole sex, even as the abuse of them in general is but a bad compliment to any individual.

Lady Mandeville.—"I cannot but think the commonplace and sweeping satire he bestows on us a great fault in the clever and original author of *Sydenham*. However, I hold it but as the ingenious vanity of a young man: had he praised, people would only have said, 'very interesting, but so romantic;' but he censures, and the remark is, 'he must know a great deal to know so much evil.' Perhaps this is the cause why the judgments of the young are generally so severe,—censure has to them somewhat the seeming of experience; and in reason as in fashion, we doubly affect what we have not."

Mr. Morland.—"It puts me in mind of a little speech of his to a lady who reproached him for praising her young friend's style of wreath and ringlet, when he knew it was not becoming—'Could you suspect me of speaking the truth to a young lady?'"

Lady Mandeville.—"Now, the knowledge of our sex that speech supposed! Nothing is so disparaging as vanity! It seems, like the Tartar, to suppose it acquires the qualities of the individual it destroys."

Edward Lorraine.—"To return to our theatricals; I was delighted with Miss Kemble's

Portia; her rich melancholy voice gives such effect to poetry. I missed her when she was not on the stage, in spite of the absorbing interest of that most calumniated and ill-used person, the Jew."

Emily.—"A most amiable person you have chosen for your object of interest."

Edward Lorraine.—"I do think him so ill used: his riches matter of mingled envy and reproach—himself insulted,—his daughter, to whom, at least, he softens into affection—otherwise so chilled and checked—deserts, nay, robs him,—I am sure he has most sufficient cause of resentment against 'these Christians;' only I cannot forgive his craven conduct in the last scene: had I been Shylock, I would have exacted my penalty at its utmost peril,—my life should have cheaply bought Antonio's."

Mr. Morland.—"That would have been carrying revenge sufficiently far."

Edward Lorraine.—"Truly, I hold revenge to be a moral duty. To permit ourselves to be injured with impunity, is to give an encouragement to evil, which may afterwards turn against others as well as ourselves. Some one says, revenge is such a luxury, the gods keep it to themselves; when they do permit us to parti-

cipate in the enjoyment, by placing it in our power, it is downright ingratitude not to partake."

Lady Mandeville.—"A most amiable and peaceful doctrine!"

Mr. Morland.—"I, for one, do not wish those days to return, when a man's forefathers left him a feud by way of inheritance, or a quarrel as a legacy."

Edward Lorraine.—"Well, well, we can still have a suit in chancery; and I do not see but that, when

'Your *lawyers* are met, a terrible shew,'

the redress will be about as destructive to both sides as when you faced your opponent at the head of your armed retainers; though, for myself, I am free to confess, I never ride up the avenue where I first catch sight of the towers of Etheringhame without regret for the days when our banner floated over five hundred horsemen, and the crested helmets on the wall were not, as now, a vain shew for the antiquary."

Lady Mandeville.—"Yes—you have cause to regret those days, when, as a younger brother, you would have been put into a monastery or

a dungeon ! You must confess that our modern days of clubs, cabriolets, and comfort, is somewhat more advanced towards perfection."

Edward Lorraine.—" Why, comfort is a very comparative term : it is true, I prefer the crimson carpet under my feet to the rushes with which my ancestors would have strewed my floor ; but if I had never seen the carpet, I could not have missed it—as Cibber, in his beautiful poem of the Blind Boy, says—

‘ I do not feel
The want I do not know.’ ”

Mr. Morland.—" The hope of improvement is a quality at once so strong and so excellent in the human mind, that I, for one, disapprove of any sophism—or, if you will, argument—that tends to repress it. It is certain that nothing ever produces either the evil or the good prognosticated ; circumstances always occur which no one could have foreseen, and which always both alter and ameliorate. Our age is a little self-important—so was its predecessor—so will be its follower : it is a curious fact, but the worst and the best is always said and thought of the existing time. For my part, I neither think that our present day is all but perfec-

tion, nor do I quite hold with those who only put my gardener's belief into different words, 'that learning and good roads will ruin the kingdom.'"

Lady Mandeville.—"One of the manias of the present day, which especially excites my spleen, is the locomotive rage which seems to possess all ranks—that necessity of going out of town in the summer—people, for example, in the middle classes, who have a comfortable and well-furnished house—to live in some small cottage or miserable lodgings, the chief of whose recommendation seems to be, that they are either damp or windy; they give up regular habits and comforts, an innovation on the least of which would have occasioned a fortnight's grumbling at any other time; but now, 'the lady's health required change of air,' or 'it would do the children so much good.'"

Edward Lorraine.—"You have forgotten the genteel sound of 'we passed the summer at Worthing,' or 'the autumn at Hastings.'"

Mr. Morland.—"Nothing appears to me so absurd as placing our happiness in the opinion others entertain of our enjoyments, not in our own sense of them. The fear of being thought

vulgar, is the moral hydrophobia of the day; our weaknesses cost us a thousand times more regret and shame than our faults."

Lady Mandeville.—“ Ah, if we could but keep a little for our own use of the wisdom we so liberally bestow on others! Nothing can be more entire than my conviction of the truth of what we have been saying—but I wish you good morning, for I must tease—I mean persuade—Lord Mandeville to go to Lady Falcondale's fête—not that I have myself the *least* wish to go,—but every body will be there.”

“ I wonder,” said Lorraine, as she departed, “ whether any thing can be more musical than Lady Mandeville's laugh. What a risk it is to laugh! Laughter may be generally classed under three heads,—forced, silly, or vulgar; but hers is the most sweet, real, *spirituelle* sound possible—it so appreciates the wit, which it increases as it catches—it speaks of spirits so fresh, so youthful! I think Weld is the traveller who says he loved to sit of an evening in the shade where he could hear the laughter of the Indian women—that it had on him the effect of music: I say the same of Lady Mandeville's.”

Mr. Morland.—“ The author of Paul Clifford

is the first who has made open war, and turned his ridicule against the sombre followers of Lord Byron; but I think he goes too far in the close alliance he supposes between good spirits and genius. The favourite topic of our philosophers is the weakness, that of the poets the sorrows of human nature—its fears also, and its crimes. These are not very enlivening subjects, and yet they are universally chosen; and for one great reason—in some or other of their shapes they come home to every one's experience. It is very true that Homer's general tone is exciting, warlike, and glad, like the sound of a trumpet; still, his most popular passages are those touched with sorrow and affection: the parting of Hector and Andromache is uppermost in the minds of the great body of his readers; and the grief of Priam touches the many much more than the godlike attributes of Achilles. I believe genius to be acute feeling gifted with the power of expression, and with that keen observation which early leads to reflection; and few can feel much of, or think much on, the various lessons of life, and not say, in the sorrowful language of the Psalmist, 'My soul is heavy within me.' But as the once beautifully-moulded figures,

that pass through the various casts taken in plaster of Paris, till scarce a trace remains of their original symmetry and grace in the base copies hawked about the streets—so an idea, or a feeling, once true and beautiful, becomes garbled and absurd by passing through the hands of awkward imitators. I have not the slightest intention of taking up the defence of ‘young gentlemen who make frowns in the glass;’ in truth, their laments and regrets are about as just as those of an old gentleman of my acquaintance, blessed—I believe that is the proper phrase—with a more than ordinary portion of children and grandchildren, but who kept dying off, and being buried in the family vault, to the great sorrow of the grandfather, who, equally vexed and indignant, complained, ‘there will not be a bit of room for me in my own vault.’”

Edward Lorraine.—“A hard case, truly, to outlive one’s very grave; though, to me at least, there is something very revolting in our system of burial—something very contrary to the essentially cheerful spirit of our religion. I can conceive no scene more chilling and more revolting than a London burying-ground; haste, oblivion, selfishness, are its outward

signs. I love not this desire to loose the ties between the living and the dead; the sorrowful affection which lingers over the departed is too sacred, too purifying a feeling, to be thus hurriedly put aside. With all that is false and affected about Père la Chaise, the feeling which founded it, and which it still keeps alive, is a good one; for no solitary moment passed in thoughtfulness beside the deceased was ever yet without its price to the survivor."

Mr. Morland. — "They say that every age has its ruling vice—I think impatience is that of our present—we live in such a hurry that we have not time to be sorry."

Edward Lorraine. — "And we shall have no time to be charitable—we have to attend the Ladies' Bazaar; we are destined to fall victims to-day to smiles, pincushions, and compassion: to my certain knowledge, Miss Arundel, the other morning, despatched a whole regiment of dolls."

Moore says,

Lightly falls the foot of Time,
Which only treads on flowers.

Pleasantly did the day pass to Emily—one gets so soon accustomed to the society of a

beloved object. Habit is a second nature, and what was at first pleasure is next necessity. Words, such nothings in themselves — trifles, so unimportant — walks, where there is nothing to see — amusements, where there is nothing to do — how delightful they become under *some* circumstances! Well, it would not do to be always in love; as a travelling merchant observed to his wife, who had indulged somewhat too liberally, for nearly a whole week, in the fascinating fluid called “mountain dew,” — “What! to-day, again? — this won’t do every day — you wouldn’t be an angel, would you?”

Though we differ in the gentleman’s estimate of angelic nature, we will apply his words, and say to the enamoured — “This won’t do every day — you wouldn’t be an angel, would you?”

CHAPTER XX.

I saw the guardian Cupid of our town
Dressed in a mercantile, staid suit of brown ;
A wig he wore—a slate was on his knee,
On which he cast up sums industriously ;
Complexion, morning—hair, like midnight dark —
Balance, good county interest and a park ;
Sings like an angel—dances like a grace—
Chances from Grosvenor Square to Connaught Place.
But while with this arithmetic amused,
His bow and arrows lay behind unused.

MILTON.

“ We must not be too exquisite—
We live by admiration.”

WORDSWORTH.

“ I wish,” said Lady Mandeville, as she and Emily met on a crowded staircase, “ you would let me recommend my *coiffeur* to you.”

“ A gentleman most devoted,” observed her husband, “ to the science. Aware that appearance is every thing in this world, he holds it little less than a sin to neglect it. Meeting him stepping like a feather, or as light as one of his own curls, I stopped to ask Signor Julio

Rosettini why he had not been in attendance during the last fortnight; and knowing how dear fame is to genius, I assured him I had scarcely known Lady Mandeville to be herself. That 'I was too good,' and that 'my perceptions of the beautiful were exquisite,' were his no less flattering rejoinders. He then proceeded to inform me that a porter had first ran against him with a square trunk, and then knocked him down for being in the way. 'You know, milor, your countrymen of the *canaille* are very independent—of course my face was cut, and even the humblest of Beauty's slaves would not enter her presence disfigured.' There's a professor of *pommade divine* for you!"

Emily laughed, and said, "Indeed, I shall expect to have 'a Cupid ambushed in each curl' under the skilful hands of Signor Julio. I will try his power to-morrow."

Now, it is a very debateable point in my mind, whether any woman ever thanks another for recommending either *coiffeur*, *modiste*, or any of those modern artisans of the graces—it is a tacit reflection on her previous appearance. But Emily was far too new to think of that impertinent independence—a taste of her own; she therefore received the advice with juvenile

thankfulness. Moreover, she recollected having heard Lorraine admire the classic perfection of Lady Mandeville's head. Motives are like harlequins—there is always a second dress beneath their first.

The next night, her glance at the glass was certainly a very satisfactory one; and, in all that pleasant consciousness which attends a new dress, she entered the drawing-room. Here a slight disappointment awaited her—Lorraine had gone to another party, and was only to join them at Mrs. Grantham's. Emily turned away from the fire-place, though there was a mirror over it, and sat down in a large arm-chair, and picked, leaf by leaf, the beautiful rosebuds which she had that very afternoon chosen with such care from the crimson multitude of their companions.

It is a very different thing to be first seen, without competitor except your own shadow, to being but one in a crowd—your head, and perhaps one arm, only visible—the first glossiness of the ringlet, and the first freshness of the white tulle, departed for ever. These are heavy disappointments at nineteen, and even a little later. Her eyes grew large and dark with the tears that, in a moment after, were checked—shame

put down sorrow, but not till the lashes glistened with momentary brightness. But in youth, happiness deferred turns into hope. "I won't dance, and I'll sit near the door," thought Emily.

A sort of fatality attends resolutions—they are so very rarely kept. For the first time, whether it was from having been accustomed to see her dance lately, Lady Alicia bethought her Miss Arundel would like a partner. She also caught the particularly low bend of a Mr. Granville, and, instantly introducing him to Emily, sunk back in her chair with an appearance of heroic exertion.

Mr. Granville was at present on sufferance in society—working his slow way, and trying to be useful and agreeable, in order that he might reach the proud pre-eminence of being neither. Who he was, was rather debateable ground—what he had, was more easily answered: he came out on the strength of his uncle's will. Some persons skate into society—others slide. Mr. Granville belonged to the latter class. He had an otto-of-rose smile, a low voice, large white hands, and a large white handkerchief. You could not be rude to him, for he took it as a personal compliment. To

a gentleman's opinion he deferred—with a lady's he agreed: while his own idea of conversation was a series of commonplace questions, which seemed only asked that he might be of the same opinion as your answer. To sum up—he danced indefatigably, and complained of the heat. The linked sweetness of the quadrille was indeed long drawn out; but, bad as this was, worse remained behind. The dance ended, and he introduced a friend—as if such a man had any business with a friend!

Mr. Marchal had written a small volume of poems, and conceived he had a character to support—somewhat needless to support what so few knew he had assumed. During the first part of the quadrille, he was absent—during the last, eloquent. He asked Emily if she did not dote upon Byron, and idolise Italy: he candidly confessed that he only existed by moonlight. “Of course, you understand that by existence I mean the awakening of the higher faculties of the soul.” He remarked, that dancing was a remnant of ancient barbarism—talked a little of the time wasted in such unintellectual pursuits—dwelt on the heartlessness of society—and finished with a practical proof of his assertion, by handing Emily to a seat

between two old ladies, whose nodding plumes soon closed over her like a hearse.

They say parties are so very delightful : I have my doubts—and doubts, like facts, are stubborn things. I put the chaperones out of the question—we will suppose the few sacrificed for the good of the many—and we know martyrdom has its pride and pleasure—and pass on to the young, for whose enjoyment these parties are ostensibly given. The age where the mere delight of dancing with a grown-up person suffices unto itself, is soon past. The ball assumes its nominative case, and requires an object ; and flirtation—the adopted child of *ennui*—relieves the more serious business of matrimonial speculation. The worst of this pretty sort of half-and-half indolent excitement is, that it unidealises the heart—to a woman especially. And love is either annihilated by the deadly weight of calculation, or evaporates in the light fumes of vanity. A few years of feverish hopes, a few more of envious fears, and the complexion is faded, and the game over. How much of endeavour and of disappointment, of rivalry and mortification, have been crowded into a few brief years !

The difference between a woman's career and a man's is this : if a man has not had all the success in life his " young ambition dreamed," he has usually carved out some sort of path : if, for example, he is not, as he intended, Lord Chancellor, he has probably a very pretty practice on the circuit, and has a respectable share in the hangings and transportations. It is the reverse with women. She who aimed at a coronet may sometimes end with a curate; but she is equally likely to end, like Christabelle, in nothing—that social nonentity, an old maid.

Among the higher classes, the Lady Mary or Lady Sophia of the family become as very heir-looms at the country-seat as the heavy arm-chairs worked by their great-aunts, only not half so picturesque. In the middle class of life, they keep their brother's house till he marries; then they quarrel with his wife, whose influence, in that class at least, amounts to absolute monarchy; then they reside in a small private family, where they enact the part of Iris at Thetis' wedding—find out that it is very dull, and wander from boarding-house to boarding-house, carrying the events of one to the inventions of another, till they are about as much dreaded and disliked as the visits of

the tax-gatherer: in short, they are a sort of moral excise.

I knew an old lady—the very *beau idéal* of black satin and blonde, whose dignity was self-respect, and whose courtesy was one half kindness—who used to say on any slight instance of carelessness or extravagance on the part of her granddaughters, “You don’t consider what it requires to make a woman fit to be married.” One feels rather inclined to reverse her phrase, and say, “You don’t consider what it requires to make a woman fit to be an old maid.”

Feeling is very much in the way of philosophy; and Emily was much more employed in thinking how completely the large plumes and larger sleeves of her neighbours concealed her, than in speculations on the dancers. To add to her misfortunes, Mr. Marechal occupied the small vista hitherto allowed to terminate in her profile, with an attitude. Sitting opposite a pier-glass has its disadvantages: however, when things come to the worst, they mend.

“Mr. Marechal,” said one of the ladies, “will you fetch my cloak—I feel it cold.”

“I was just going,” replied the languid lyrist, “to make you the very same request;

for I suffer greatly from the draught of your feathers."

To be rude is as good as being clever. The pleasure of repeating Mr. Marechal's reply quite consoled the lady for fetching her own cloak; and she moved off, to Emily's great satisfaction, which satisfaction had, however, to stand the test of another very dull half hour. Long before any less interested glance could have discovered his entrance, her eye rested on Lorraine. "O how superior he looks to every one else!" was her first thought. The next moment cheek and eye brightened with pleasure—for he crossed the room, engaged her for the next dance, and took his place by her side.

Alas! we give our own colouring to the actions of others. Edward acted upon a mere kindly impulse. He saw Miss Arundel sitting by herself, and looking with a weariness worthy of a watch-tower. There was as much pity as preference in his choice: but the one is a much more flattering reason to assign than the other. Can we wonder that at nineteen Emily drew the pleasanter conclusion? With spirits and smiles equally bright, she took the wreath that night from her hair. Too excited for sleep,

with all that glad restlessness, which, if not happiness, is as like it as any thing we know—that very night she sat down and wrote a long letter to her uncle. Its tone was not quite so philosophical as it had been about the heartless insipidity of a London season.

CHAPTER XXI.

We should be grateful to that fairy queen,
Sweet Fancy ; she who makes dreams tangible,
And gives the outer world wherein we live
Light from the inner one, where feelings dwell,
And poetry, and colours beautiful,
Shedding a charm upon our daily life,
And keeping yet some childhood in the heart.

“ I WAS quite alarmed yesterday while dining with Mr. Morland, to find him, Miss Arundel, so great an admirer of yours. I entreat,” said Lorraine, “ that you will not destroy my *beau idéal* of sixty and singlehood.”

“ Vain fears !” replied Emily, laughing. “ A lover may give up his mistress, but not a philosopher his system. It would be bad taste in him to marry again ; and such an argument would with him be decisive. Good taste is his religion, his morality, his standard, and his test. I remember Mr. Delawarr was telling a story of a most shocking murder that a man had committed — beating his wife’s brains out

with a hammer. 'Bad taste,' said Mr. Morland; 'very bad taste!' At first I thought he alluded to the murder; but I afterwards found it was the mode in which the murder was committed."

Edward Lorraine. — "Allowing for a little feminine exaggeration, you are not far wrong. Mr. Morland carries his principle to its extent; but in his hands it is an excellent rule of action. To avoid the ridiculous, and pursue the beautiful, would be equally his rule for the statesman and the upholsterer. Consistency of action, attention to results, and also to present benefit on the one side, and harmony of colour and graceful effect on the other, he urges arise from the same principle under different circumstances—viz. good taste! His house and his conduct, his dress and his language, are equally perfect. He lives a short distance out of London. 'I must have,' I have often heard him say, 'quiet;' so I avoid living in a street—I look upon my fine old trees—my growth of summer flowers, links between myself and nature. I grow too worldly, and I freshen my imagination with my roses. I grow disputatious and discontented among volumes of feverish study, vain aspirings, and useless information; I open one of my

windows, and in so doing shake a shower of blossoms from the clematis. I step out into the sunshine, and feel rejoiced to think there is a bright side still in the world. I live near town, for I am yet unwilling the age should leave me far behind it. I have old friends with whom I talk of the past, and young ones with whom I talk of the present. In youth one only grows romantic in solitude; but in old age one grows selfish. I have no interests to jar against those of others; society, therefore, calls forth my more kindly feelings. I have a noble fortune; and, what is more, I know the value of it, both as it regards myself and others. I have an excellent library of my own, and a subscription to a circulating one—an admirable cook—and a cellar where the sunshine of many a summer is treasured. I have much experience, and a little philosophy. I own the vanity of many a former anxious pursuit; but am equally ready to own I did not see the vanity of it at the time. I am now well content to be spectator of the world's great stage with kindness—my still remaining link with its present actors.' Confess, Miss Arundel, this is all in very good taste."

Miss Arundel.—"I trust you are not hoping for an argument in expecting me to deny it;

and I must add, I have seen few persons in London whom I liked so much, perhaps because his kind manner puts me so much in mind of my uncle."

"But I have interrupted you. What were the leaves you were so carefully turning?" and Edward took up a number of Martin's Illustrations of Milton.

"I never," said Emily, "have my idea of a palace realised but in these pictures—the halls of porphyry through which Prince Ahmed was led to the throne of his fairy queen—or those of a thousand pillars of black marble, where the young king sat an enchanted statue."

Edward Lorraine.—"I should like to be the Czar, if it were only to give some millions of my barbarians employment in erecting a palace after Martin's design. It would be for their benefit. The monarch must be noble as his dwelling; and my ideas would be exalted as my roof, and my actions imitate the beauty and regularity of my pillars."

Miss Arundel.—"Do not you think his landscapes have the same magnificent spirit of poetry in them as his architecture? Look at these trees, each one a temple—these rocks, yet warm with the lightning flash, which has

just rent a fearful chasm. I know not why, but I never see a stream of his painting but I recall those lines of Coleridge's :

' Where Alph, the sacred river, ran,
Down to a sunless sea.'

If he had lived in the days of the Caliphs, Zobeide would have chosen him to paint the palace of pictures she wagered with Haroun Alraschid."

Edward Lorraine.—"What an illustrator he would be of the Arabian Nights! His pencil would be like the wand of their own genii; the lamp itself could not call up a more gorgeous hall than he would. Think of those magnificent windows, of which even a king had not gems enough in his treasury to finish only one; or what would he not image of the enchanted garden itself, where the grapes were rubies, the flowers of pearl, and the mysterious shrine where burnt the mystic lamp. I would assemble them in a picture-gallery, where once a year I would ask my friends to a banquet, sacred to the memory of M. de Caillaud."

Miss Arundel.—"And drink his health in Shiraz wine."

Edward Lorraine.—"I would do as he has

done—mix it with some of his native Champagne. I think the extent of our obligations to that most perfect of translators has never been felt. Compare his with the versions that have since come—

‘ Sad dreams, as when the spirit of youth
Returns again in sleep, and leads us back
In mournful mockery o’er the shining track’

of the enchanted world of genii, sultans, and princesses. The reason is, they give us the literal story, and foolishly pique themselves on the accuracy of their translation, and their knowledge of Arabic. Caillaud, on the contrary, did as Shakespeare did, who, out of the stupid novels of Cynthio, extracted a Romeo and Juliet. He modelled his raw *matériel*, and told the story with his own especial grace, in addition to what is a national gift to his countrymen, *l’art de conter*. By the by, I think it among the great honours to French literature, that one of its most original branches, fairy tales, is peculiarly its own. I believe the Children in the Wood, Whittington and his Cat, and Little Red Ridinghood, are those only, of all our popular tales, which have an English origin. Now, the first rather belongs to our

simple and beautiful ballad school; the next, a Utilitarian might have written as a good encouraging lesson of poverty rising into wealth—a tale in the very spirit of *la nation boutiquière*; and as for Little Red Ridinghood, the terror, the only feeling it is calculated to produce, is beneath the capacity of any critic past five years of age.

“ But look at the imagination, the vivacity, of the others: we read them in childhood for the poetry of their wonders, and in more advanced life for their wit; for they are the Horaces of fairy land. The French have the very perfection of short stories in their literature—little touches like the flight of a shining arrow. I remember one that began: ‘ There was once a king and queen, very silly people, but who loved each other as much as if they had been wiser, perhaps more.’ Then, again, speaking of some fairy portent: ‘ They could not at all understand it—therefore took it for granted it was something very terrible or very fine;’ or, again, ‘ The queen was for ever in an ill humour, but had the best heart in the world.’ We English have no word that translates that of *persiflage*; and for this reason, a nation only wants words for the things it knows—and of this we have no

understanding. An exquisite distinction I once heard made between wit and humour, appears to me admirably to apply to that of the French and English—that humour differs from wit in being more nearly allied with pathos. Thus it is with us Islanders—we can be merry, but not lively; and mirth brings its own reaction. Lord Byron wrote quite as an Englishman when he said

‘Laughter

Leaves us so doubly saddened shortly after.’”

Emily Arundel.—“How well I remember sitting under a favourite old chestnut-tree, with a huge folio of tales filled with pictures—kings and queens, always with their crowns on their heads—and fairies, with large hoops, and wings on their shoulders!”

Edward Lorraine.—“Talking of wings—with what magnificent plumes does Martin invest his angels, as if tinged by every ray of sunshine they caught in their descent to the earth; and their size, too, gives such an idea of power!”

Emily Arundel.—“But to go back to supposing subjects for his pictures. What do you say to the midnight fête in the gardens of Scherzrabade, when the Caliph visited his

beautiful favourite? Think of the hundred black slaves, with their torches of scented wax—the guards with their gorgeous turbans and glittering cimeters—the lighted galleries of the palace—the gardens with their thousand lamps—the sparkling fountains—and the lake, one gigantic mirror of the whole festival.”

Edward Lorraine.—“As only inferior to my own subject: every one has his favourite hero; and mine, the only gentleman Rome ever possessed, is Lucullus. I have a very disrespectful feeling towards your great men who piqued themselves on wearing an old cloak, and who resorted to peeling turnips as an elegant employment for their leisure hours. Lucullus conquered; and, after energy and exertion, sought refinement and repose. He cultivated his thoughts instead of his radishes; and he studied that union of luxury and philosophy, which is the excellence of refinement. My picture is ‘Lucullus at supper.’”

Emily Arundel.—“Nay, I cannot admit the superiority of your subject.”

Edward Lorraine.—“Because you have not considered it. I suppose him at supper that night when he gave that superb reply, dictated in the noblest spirit of self-appreciation,

‘ Lucullus sups with Lucullus to-night !’ Conqueror of Asia ! victor of Mithridates ! you were worthy of your glory ! First, imagine a noble hall, of that fine blue which the walls of Portici yet preserve, supported by Corinthian pillars of the purest Parian marble ; scatter round a few pieces of exquisite sculpture—a Venus, of beauty as ideal as its dream—a nymph, only less lovely—an Apollo, the personification of the genius which first imagined, and then bodied forth his likeness—a few busts, each one a history of the immortal mind—and in the distance a huge portal unfolds, whence are issuing slaves, in all the gorgeous variety of Eastern costume, approaching a table bright with purple grapes—the ruby cherries, his own present of peace to Italy—flasks of wine, like imprisoned sunbeams, whether touched with the golden light of noon, or the crimson hues of sunset—goblets of crystal, vases of gold and silver, or the finely-formed Etruscan ; and above, a silver lamp, like an earthly moon. There are two windows—in the one a violet-coloured curtain, waved back by the wind, just discovers a group of Ionian girls ; their black hair wreathed with flowers, and holding lutes, whose sweet chorus is making musical the air

of a strange land with the songs of their own. The other window has the rich Italian evening only shut out by the luxuriant branches of a myrtle ; and beyond is a grove of cypress, a small and a winding river —

A fairy thing,
Which the eye watches in its wandering.

Seated on the triclinium in the midst is a middle-aged man, with a high and noble brow ; the fine aquiline nose, so patrician, as if their eagle had set his own seal on his warlike race ; an expression of almost melancholy sweetness in his mouth, but of decision in the large meditative blue eye : on one side a written scroll, bearing the name of Plato, has just dropped from his hand ; and on the other, a beautiful youth kneels to announce to him, ‘ that Lucullus sups with Lucullus to-night.’ Mr. Morland has a vacant niche in his breakfast-room : I really must call his attention to this.”

“ You could never do so better than to-day,” said that identical gentleman, entering the little drawing-room where they were seated.

“ I have just been persuading Delawarr to leave politics, parchments, places, and plans, for my acacias, now in full bloom, and some of my most aromatic Burgundy. Lady Alicia,

like a good wife, has consented to accompany him; and I am come to insist on you young people following the example of your elders; and, moreover, I have a little girl of mine with whom I wish Miss Arundel to be delighted. You are to set off at once, *toilette de matin*: you know ladies never dress but for each other; and that pretty green silk will be just in keeping with my shrubbery. Now, I only allow you five minutes to place your bonnet just the least in the world on the left side. You must trust to genius, not to study, to-day." And, in spite of the thousand-and-one delays that always intervene before a party of pleasure sets off, ten minutes had not elapsed before the whole party were on the road.

It had been settled that Lorraine was to drive Emily in his phaeton. It is true the sun was full in her eyes, the wind high, and the dust, which is just mud in high spirits, flew round them in clouds; but Emily found her ride delightful. Is it not Wordsworth, who, in his quality of philosopher and poet, says,

" It is the heart does magnify this life,
Making a truth and beauty of its own ?"

About the beauty we entirely agree with him

—touching the truth, we are not quite so certain : but poets often mistake, and philosophers still oftener. Emily's own feelings coloured all with themselves. Generally speaking, she rather wanted animation : what are called high spirits are quite as much habitual as constitutional. Living with people much older than herself—an aunt never much put out of her way by any thing—and an uncle, whose stately courtesy of the old school was tinged by a native timidity which age itself never entirely conquers—she had not been accustomed to give way to those impulses of a moment's gaiety which break forth in gay laugh and bounding step. Or is there a prophetic spirit in the human mind, which makes those of the keenest feelings often appear cold ; an intuitive, though unowned, fear, repressing sensations of such deep and intense power ? They cannot feel only a little ; and they shrink, though with an unconscious dread, from feeling too much.

But to-day Emily's gaiety took its tone from the bright sunshine. Both herself and Edward in that gay mood which makes its own enjoyment, and enjoys every thing : they were soon on the beautiful common leading to Roehampton, where villas, which seem, like

Beatrice's idea of King Pedro for a husband, made only for holydays—the luxuriant meadows, varying, as the passing clouds turn them, from bright glittering to the richest and darkest green—here shrubberies, whose flowering shrubs overhung the road, scenting the air with a moment's fragrance as they passed—then, again, the close-cut hawthorn hedge, like a green knoll, from which some unshorn branch occasionally rose, covered with a few late blossoms of May.

A turn in the road brought them to the group of fine old elms which overshadowed Mr. Morland's gate. Out they sprung from the carriage—gaily laughing at the idea of welcoming the master to his own house—and Edward acted as guide through the serpentine walk that led to the library. The boughs met overhead—every step brought down a shower of coloured and fragrant leaves—till they stopped on the lawn. Genoa's princely merchants never freighted vessel with velvet of softer texture or richer green. Suddenly a sweet voice, singing, like a bird, for the pleasure of singing, came from the room; and, putting back a branch covered with a thousand of the little crimson Ayrshire roses, they stepped

through the window, and saw a girl, apparently about thirteen, engaged, with all the earnestness with which childhood follows its pursuits, in placing flowers in divers vases. It was evident no small share of taste and industry was bestowed on the task; their entrance, however, interrupted the progress of some scarlet geranium towards some myrtle—the child started—and her first intention of a rapid flight was evidently only checked by natural politeness—or, rather, that inherent kindness, out of which cultivation afterwards extracts the most graceful courtesy. Shyness is too much a mere impulse in very early youth to be lasting; and reserve was lost in the dismay of the intelligence that her father was returning before she had finished the decoration of his room, with which she meant to surprise him. Nothing like a little trouble for the beginning of acquaintance—assistance was readily offered, and as readily accepted—and all the vases were in their places, and Helen not a little delighted with her new friends; when the rest of the party made their appearance.

Dinner had been ordered at once; and luncheon (that cruel destruction of our best feelings, as the Ettrick Shepherd calls it,)

having been omitted, there was sufficient hunger to do justice to a banquet the most refined in its perfection. Not that hunger does a cook justice. "I do not like people that are hungry," says Ude; "hungry people eat any thing: I would have my dishes create of themselves an appetite; I do not wish them to be wanted till they are tasted, and then to eat is a compliment."

But it was on the dessert Mr. Morland piqued himself. It was served in the room Helen had been so anxious to ornament. The delicate colour of the fruit—the fragrant spirit of the Burgundy—the icy coolness of the claret—were not destroyed by an atmosphere already heavy with soup and fish, and heated by two courses of culinary triumph: no! the air, pure and clear, was only imbued with the sweetness of the strawberry, or the breath of the roses from the window—while the garden beyond reminded you how fresh was the fruit which heaped the silver baskets.

It is true enough for a proverb, that the pleasantest parties are those of which the least can be told. To make a recital entertaining, there must be a little touch of the ridiculous—a few sparkles of satire—the excellence of a

sarcasm lies, like a cimeter, in its keenness ;— and they enjoyed themselves too much to be witty—“ *la sauce vaut le poisson* ;” and hence it is that, even when good-natured people do say a clever thing, it rarely tells—and all to-day were in a good humour.

Perhaps that which had the most delighted the visitors was their host's daughter—for Helen was one of the very sweetest creatures that ever blushed or smiled : there was a refinement in her simplicity—an infection in her gaiety—a something touching in her affectionate manners, that drew their fascination all from the same source—they were all so perfectly natural. She appeared much younger than she was—for Helen was in reality fifteen ; but both the aunt with whom she resided, and her father, were old-fashioned enough to wish her childhood to be as long as possible. The mind may be cultivated, the manners formed, and the girl have acquired the polish of the woman ; but how much of buoyant spirits must have been quelled—how much of enjoyment lost in the acquisition !

Childhood is not often a happy season—it is too much forced and controlled, and nature too much exiled from the fairest spot in all her do-

main ; but it can be a glad and guileless time—and Helen's had been a very happy childhood.

But the dark or bright day finds its end in night, and again the phaeton retraced the morning's road. Every tree and field were now silvered with the soft moonlight—there was a repose around which even the voice seemed too rudely to break. They were both silent—but did Emily find the evening's silence less delightful or less dangerous?

“How infinitely,” said Lorraine at last, “I prefer a night like this—a sky broken by a thousand clouds—to one entirely cloudless! The clear sky is too forcible a contrast to ourselves—it is too bright, too calm for sympathy with our troubled state—I almost dislike the perfect repose in which I can have no part—while the shadows that to-night gather round the moon seem to have a fellow-feeling with our checkered existence.”

Emily made no answer—a sudden weight had fallen on her spirits—her eyes were full of unbidden tears—a voice seemed to arise within her, and to say, “To-night—even to-night—you stand on the threshold of your fate: happiness is only turning one last and lonely look before it leaves you for ever.”

People talk—and wisely, too—of the folly of presentiments; but let the thoughts speak their secret, will they assert their disbelief? Our nature has many mysteries—the moral and physical world are strangely allied; the weight on the air presages the hurricane—the darkness on the heaven the tempest—why may not destiny have its signs, and the heart its portents, and the nameless sadness that oppresses the spirits forebode the coming sorrow? But Emily only thought of hers as a weakness—she strove to shake it off. The lamps now grew brilliant—the houses gathered into streets—while imagination, as usual, took flight before realities—and they arrived at home, gaily discussing the chances of to-morrow's ball. Once in her own room, fatigue and sentiment were terribly at variance—and sleep is a true pleasure, if one had not to get up in the morning. Do not tell me of the happiness of life, when every day begins with a struggle and a sacrifice. To get up in the morning, both in the enjoyment it resigns and the resolution it requires, is an act of heroism.

CHAPTER XXII.

"Come like shadows, so depart."—*Macbeth*.

"How shall I yield you fit entertainment?"—COLERIDGE.

"A hemisphere of stars."—BYRON, *or the Morning Post*.

"These written troubles of the brain."—*Macbeth*.

It had been settled, that the next evening, on their way to Mrs. Dorrick's, they should look in for an hour at the Athenæum, it being one of those Wednesdays when gentlemen invite ladies, to shew how admirably they can do without them, on the same principle that a well-supplied, though beleaguered city courts the presence of spies, and displays its strength and resources till surrounding enemies are fain to raise the siege from very hopelessness of success. Clubs are just a modification of monasteries — places of refuge from female attentions; and, as in former days, the finest architecture, the best situation, the most elaborate *cuisine*, the most refined cellar, are devoted to their use. The principal modern improvements are the omission of

fasting and penance, and the substitution of magazines for missals.

“ Whoso enters here leaves hope behind,”

should be the Wednesdays' motto. The deep crimson of the walls is alone enough to annihilate a thousand of the rose-coloured visions which haunted last night's quadrille. All a young lady should pray for, is a severe lingering fit of illness, to impress upon her debating lover a just feminine valuation ;—fevers and agues are the best stepping-stones to the hymeneal altar.

Well; our party entered, walked, and looked round,—and expressed their admiration or their censure, the former greatly preponderating; for the ladies feel they are only there on sufferance, which makes politeness a necessity. From the place they turned to the people; and when criticism is in a crowd, it is of a motley kind, and certainly not “ too discreet;” for what but something ridiculous can be said about those we do not know,—and this lady with her weak wan face, and its multitude of heavy ringlets, like the Dead Sea between two weeping willows,—that gentleman with the wilful whiskers encroaching like the sands over the yellow desert of his cheek,—or that youth

with the shining black head, as polished as his boots, audibly proclaiming Warren's best,—soon exhausted the stock of similes, if not of sneers; besides, the attention was attracted to individuals.

"Who is that?" said Emily, as a gentleman, with one of the most sparkling and keen glances in the world—which she was quite pretty enough to attract for a moment—passed by.

"One of our first poets," replied Lorraine. "I must tell you a very happy compliment paid him the other day by one who was speaking of his powers of sentiment and sarcasm: 'When one reads your lyrics, the exclamation is *amour!* (ah, Moore!); but after your satires, it is *Timour* (T. Moore) the Tartar.' As for himself, he is the Venus throw in society; his conversation carries you along with the ease and grace of skating; he tells a story as if M. Caillaud had left him his mantle, or as if in him were realised the classic tale of the bees that settled round the mouth of Sophocles, leaving their honey behind them. In listening to him I perfectly understand the feeling which made Napoleon interrupt some unhappy elongator of narrative with '*Allons! Denon, contez nous cela.*' He is our English Denon."

“ Look at that serious-seeming personage, who walks from one end of the room as if he meant to commit suicide at the other.”

“ That is one of our patrician *disceurs*, or rather *faiseurs*, of *bons mots*,—one who says good things, not as if he had any pleasure or vanity in saying them, but rather, in the very spirit of our nation, as if he had a stock on hand he was desirous to dispose of to the best advantage. Many of his ideas are very original: talking of the picturesque the other day, he said,—‘ So common is it, indeed, that every body travels to talk about it; when I travel, my carriage shall only have a skylight.’ He has an odd habit, or rather affectation, of muttering to himself what he intends afterwards to say; for example, ‘ Woman,—yes, very pretty,—but too much colour; I must ask who she is.’ ‘ Wine,—I see there a man I must ask to take wine with me—great bore;’ and then follows, ‘ Shall I have the honour, pleasure,’ or whatever form the great question of wine may take. Lord E., who knew his habit, resolved one day to set up an opposition muttering, and forthwith commenced, ‘ Wine,—yes, wine; I see there a man I would not take wine with if he asked me.’ But do you

see that gentleman seated by the fire-place? — he is one who has excited your most enthusiastic admiration.”

Emily turned, and saw a face that riveted her whole attention : melancholy and intellectual, it was of the noblest order, and the expression seemed to impart something of its own thoughtfulness to the beholder. The shape of the head, the outline of the face, had more the power and decision of the Roman, than the flowing softness of the Greek ; in a bust it would have been almost stern, but for the benevolence of the mouth. It was as if two natures contended together,—the one, proud, spiritual, severe, the expression of the head,—the other, sad, tender, and sensitive, the expression of the heart. There was melancholy, as if the imagination dwelt upon the feelings, deepening their tenderness, and refining their sorrow, and yet intellectual withal, as if the thought and the feeling sprang up together : perhaps the most striking effect was their change from their natural look of abstraction to that of observation,—the one was the glance of the poet, the other of the falcon. He is one of our most distinguished authors, in whose novels it is difficult to say whether philosophy, wit, or poetry, most

abound—the appreciation of whose excellence has been as prompt as it has been just; yet never was one less likely to find enjoyment in the course of literary success,—a course in which the meanness of the obstacles, the baseness of the opponents, the petty means of even the most entire triumph, must revolt the conqueror at his own victory; truly do they say, fame is for the dead.

“’Tis distance lends enchantment to the view.”

From childhood we hear some few great names to which mind has given an immortality: they are called the benefactors of their kind—their words are familiar to our lips—our early thoughts take their tone, our first mental pleasures are derived, from their pages—we admire, and then we imitate—we think how glorious it is to let the spirit thus go forth, winning a throne in men’s hearts, sending our thoughts, like the ships of Tyre laden with rich merchandise, over the ocean of human opinion, and bringing back a still richer cargo of praise and goodwill. Thus was it with the great men of old, and so shall it be with us. We forget that Time, the Sanctifier, has been with them; that no present interests jar against theirs; and that around them

is the calm and the solemnity of the grave; and we forget the ordeal through which they have passed to the temple. But look at any existing literary life—and we will speak only of the most successful—and who shall say that the loftiest head is not covered with dust and ashes? The first work is eminently successful, and the Eros of success has ever its Anteros of envy. Every unfortunate candidate thinks that the more fortunate stand between him and the sunshine of public favour. Then, how many are there who know no path to notoriety so easy as that which by attacking the already appreciated makes their very reputation a means, as well as a motive, for its injury. Then comes the struggle: this one is to be conciliated, the other intimidated; flattery becomes matter of exchange, and vanity self-defence; praise grows worthless in proportion as we know whence and wherefore it is given, and censure more bitter from the utter meanness of the censor. Again, the personal tone taken is revolting to a degree, the absurd and the malicious are blended, and some kind friend is always at hand to repeat. What must this be to all, and still more to one whose refined and reserved habits are so utterly at variance with the personality, the curiosity,

the base party spirit of literature? Well, while recalling the vain hope, the unworthy attack, the departed glory, may Memory exclaim with the Peri,

“ Poor race of man, said the pitying Spirit,
Dearly ye pay for your primal fall ;
Some flowers of Eden ye still inherit,
But the trail of the serpent is over them all.”

None of this, however, passed through Emily's mind. Those who have no part in the conflict see with the imagination : they behold the crimson banner, hear the stately trumpet, and think not of the dust of the march, or the agony of the battle ; and Emily gazed on the individual before her with that intense exaltation and enthusiasm which is literature's best triumph.

But her attention was now attracted to the lady who took his arm. Ah ! poets and painters have truth for the foundation of their dreams,—she, at least, looked the incarnation of her husband's genius. Her style of beauty was such as might have suited the days of chivalry—made for worship more than love—one whose affection was a triumph even more than a gift. Her mouth, which was like chiseled coral, had many smiles, and most of scorn ; and its speech had as much of sarcasm as of sweet-

ness. Her step, her height—the proud sweep of a neck which was like the swan's for snow and grace—were such as make the artificial distinctions of society seem the inherent aristocracy of nature; you felt she was never meant to breathe aught but “the air of palaces”—you never thought of calling her pretty.

Who is it that says the character of a woman is decided by the cast of her features? All sweeping assertions are erroneous. In this instance, the style of manner was opposed to the style of the features. At the first glance, the imagination likened her to those beautiful queens who followed in the triumph they disdained of the Roman conqueror—as one to whom society was as a pageant, in which she must take and yet scorn her part; but this impression passed with the first tone of the lute upon her lips—her sweet and song-like voice. Her exquisite laugh, like the sound of a shell which, instead of the night wind, is filled with the morning sunshine and bursts into music—the fascination of such feminine kindness—wit so airy, yet so keen, whose acid was not that of vinegar, dissolving all the pearls of gentler feelings, but the acid of champagne, whose pearls dance on the surface and melt into blending

sweetness—Ah! one moment's pause—I have renounced poetry, of which, sweet lady, you were to me the embodied spirit. I know flattery is impertinent, and praise is vain—yet I cannot pass the shrine of my early faith, and not at least fling a flower on it in passing: I never yet beheld being so lovely—and I never shall again; I never witnessed feelings so generous, so unspotted by the world; and my words seem unworthy and imperfect, when I say of her heart, as some early Spanish poet said of his mistress's face—

“That it has looked in Paradise, and caught
Its early beauty.”

“Look,” said Lorraine—“do you wish to see the very vainest man in England?”

“A bold assertion,” added Mr. Morland, “but a true one; for yonder gentleman is morally, mentally, personally, and politically vain.”

Emily turned towards him—there was nothing conspicuous about him but the buttons of his coat; many and bright were they, with some hieroglyphic sign impressed upon them.

“One of our first poets, he has

‘Narrowed his mind,
And to parties given up what was meant for mankind.’

And I take parties in their most varied sense—from the small flatteries of the evening party to the coarser acclamation of the club where he takes the chair—from the literary party, who make him an idol, to the political, who make him their tool."

"I have been lately," said Mr. Morland, "hearing the detail of his sitting for his picture: first, he was sketched in a Vandyke dress—then in a Spanish costume—he had some thoughts of a turban—when a friend observed, that, for the credit of the age he had immortalised, he ought to be apparelled after its fashion. He tried on forty-seven waistcoats, and at last decided on a cloak. One day the artist's attention was attracted by a little china jar which he held in his hand; the poet was more than usually restless; at last, after an earnest gaze on the sketch, and then on the mirror, he said, 'My dear young friend, intense study has done the work of years, and many a midnight vigil has paled the fresh colours of youth. You are painting for posterity—

'One would not, sure, look shocking when one's dead'—

and, uncovering the little pot of rouge, he arranged his complexion to his liking."

"At all events, that gentleman's self-estimate is a pleasant one who believes that every man looks up to, and that every woman is in love with him."

"I excuse, however, a great deal in him—

'If to his lot some female errors fall,

Read but his odes, and you 'll forget them all.'

There was something singularly picturesque in the next person that passed—tall, dark, with that flashing and hawk-like glance which generally accompanies a mouth whose expression was that of sarcasm, but whose satire, though bitter enough, seemed rather to spring from the love of amusement than from malice.

"That is Lord ~~---~~, the author of two of our very popular novels, of which the last is my especial favourite. 'Yes and No' is a lively etching of modern society—fine in the outline, and animated in colouring; the characters may or may not be portraits, but they are realities. Nothing is more difficult than to paint from nature—nothing so pleasant when achieved. To sketch real life requires a most peculiar talent, and that Lord ~~---~~ possesses."

"I met with a paragraph in some journal the other day, which made a crime of his taking

an active part in literature instead of politics—writing, instead of talking;—as if there were not speakers enow in the House to debate till doomsday. And as to the practical utility, may I be permitted to venture my opinion, that moral is at least as useful as political satire?”

“Who is yonder gentleman?” asked Emily, attracted by that air of anticipative consciousness which says, ‘all eyes are upon me, or ought to be.’

“The writer of some poems we were studying in one of the *Annals*,” replied Lorraine. “You remember the one which appears with its author’s name in capitals at the beginning, and ends with stating its claim to one merit at any rate—

‘Some praise, at least—one act of sense may claim—
He wrote these verses, but concealed his name:’

—the name, nevertheless, being the first thing we saw.”

“Ah,” said Mr. Morland, “I have quite a little history to give you—a romance of fashionable life—by which I mean the romance of effect, not feeling. Colonel Clarendon commenced his search after reputation by a journey

in the East, and astonished all Paris (the city he selected for his *début* in celebrity) by eloquent details of the delights of dwelling in goatskin tents, and galloping through the desert. *Les merveilleuses* were somewhat startled at the taste which pronounced sheep's milk and dates the perfection of luxury, but every fair head in the *Chassée de Saint Antin* was completely turned. To a gentleman of this habit of mind, *une grande passion* was indispensable, and he laid his heart and homage at the fairy-like feet of Madame de St. Leu.

"But your very vain lover is a little fatiguing for every-day wear, and the lady permitted herself a slight preference in favour of the Baron von Schmanherstoff, an Hungarian nobleman, whose furred pelisse and silver spurs had produced quite a sensation. Indignant at what he termed her treachery, the Hungarian went to his friend and told him all. Colonel Clarendon rushed to the presence of his faithless mistress, and overwhelmed himself with despair and her with reproaches. 'Are you a man,' said the lady, with an air between injured innocence and conscious dignity, 'that you tell me of this outrage before you have avenged it?—unless you are the basest coward

that ever trifled with the feelings, or insulted the honour of a woman; the affront you have offered me will be washed out in Baron von Schmanheratoff's blood. If you are a gentleman, I leave my cause in your hands.' The Colonel bowed, left the room, and sent his challenge. Next morning they met in the *Bois des Boulevards*: the friends embraced, and then fought.

"But what gave such effect to this duel were the uncommon weapons used by the combatants—broadswords. Colonel Clarendon slightly wounded the Baron, who fell—people did say, according to agreement. He threw himself by the body of his Pylades—called himself his murderer—vowed never again to see the perfidious woman who had caused the quarrel—did not tear his hair, for he rather piqued himself on his curls, but he dishevelled them. He had the Baron carried to his lodgings, and never for a fortnight left his room.

"When '*les deux amis*' appeared in public together, all Paris rang with their romantic attachment, and the Colonel found that his friendship made him as much the fashion as his travels. The renown reached even to the northern county where his father's seat is

situated. Nothing for a week—news lasts longer in the country than it does in town—was talked of but Colonel Clarendon's duel, and his devotion to his friend. I, who was then staying there, heard at least fifty versions of his despair. But I must finish my history, as there is a young poet whose writings I heard you admiring yesterday—the tall slight one—what I rather think you would call interesting-looking.”

“ Mr. Lillian,” observed Mr. Morland, “ is one of the most brilliant supporters of paradox I ever met. His conversation only requires to be a little more in earnest to be perfectly delightful. His views are original, his illustrations most happy, and an epigrammatic style sets off his speech—as novel writers say of some dress in which the heroine appears—to ‘ the best advantage.’ But—and, do you know, I think it rather a good feeling in humanity—that is to say, in myself—we like and require truth—always supposing and allowing that the said truth interferes neither with our interests nor our inclinations.”

“ I agree with you, that an opinion increases in interest, as well as weight, by its supporter appearing to mean what he says. But few

brilliant talkers are sufficiently aware of the advantage of seeming 'in earnest.'

"He struck me as an instance of the usual effect produced by society—with its Janus face of success and disappointment, of flattery and of falsehood—on a young and clever man. He sets out with believing too much—he ends with believing too little. Human nature was at first an imagination, and afterwards a theory—both equally false. Ridicule may be the test of truth, but it is not its result."

"Nevertheless, sarcasm is the royal road of the bar. Is there any thing now-a-days to which a man may not sneer his way? But, for Pity and Miss Arundel's sake, let us return to his poetry. It is that rare thing, 'a happy marriage' between *persiflage* and sentiment. He tells an ancient legend to perfection. It is a minstrel in masquerade—the romance of the olden time touched with modern taste—and his wit keen with present allusions. But, really, it is scarcely worth while to be witty, when we remember how stupid people are. One would often think that a joke was as hard to be taken as an affront. The elder brother of this very gentleman had been spending some days at a house in the country: on the

morning of departure a lady asked him, 'Pray, are you the clever Mr. Lillian?' 'I never answer flattering questions,' was his reply—or, perhaps, the reply of his brother, the 'clever Mr. Lillian,' for him, for he himself told me the story."

"Who is that youth to the left, in an attitude?"

"One who always reminds me of the French actor's reply to the manager, who asked what parts he was fit for—'*Mais tous.*' Such is Mr. Vincent's self-estimate. They say happiness is only the finer word for self-satisfaction—if so, Mr. Vincent is a happy man. He has embodied a general system of depreciatives, out of which he extracts most 'strange contents.' I never yet heard him allow merit to man, woman, or child; he speaks only in the subjunctive mood, governed by an if or a but. Talk to him of a witty person, and he finds out at once,

'That flippancy to wit is near allied,
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.'

If serious, he asks—

'Shall grave and formal pass for wise,
When men the solemn owl despise?'

Nay, one day, when, half out of want of something to say, half out of politeness, and—if you will let me divide his motives, as the school-boy, in his translation of Cæsar, did ancient Gaul, which, he said, was quartered into three halves—half out of really thinking it, I praised the beauty of a little girl playing in the room, Mr. Vincent immediately drew so gloomy a picture of the casualties to which beauty is subject, that I am not sure whether he did not talk both mother and child into the small-pox.”

At this moment our little group made an involuntary pause, to listen to the conversation of a lady close beside them.

“My story will illustrate my positive assertion. As a child, she was just the Mr. Nobody of the family—that is, the one who does all the mischief done in the house—at least, bears all the blame of it, which is much the same in its consequences. One day, a friend took her to task, as it is called. ‘Now, do you not see what a wicked little girl you are? Why do not you pray to God every morning to make you a better child?’ ‘And so I do,’ sobbed the poor little thing, ‘but he only makes me *worserer* and *worserer*.’”

At this moment the speaker turned round, and shewed a face so beautiful, that had poetry never existed before, it must have been invented in describing such loveliness. The black hair was bound with classical simplicity round a small and finely-shaped head; the face was something between Grecian and Spanish—the intellect of the one, the passion of the other; the exquisite features were like those of a statue, but a statue like that which Pygmalion called by love into life; the brow was magnificent—fit for Madame de Stael, had her mind looked its power and its grace.

“That is our English Corinne,” said Mr. Morland—“one to whom genius and beauty are birthrights. Poetry, prose, wit, pathos, are the gifted slaves of her lamp. You were reading one of her exquisite volumes this morning.”

“I was,” said Edward, “and dreaming of the author; and now I only say to her what Wordsworth said of Yarrow—

‘And thou, who didst appear so fair
To young imagination,
Didst rival, in the sight of day,
Her delicate creation.’”

A throng of small “noticeables” now passed by—poets who have written two songs, and live

upon their credit—wits who once said, or, per-adventure, repeated, a clever thing, and have made it last. But it was later than our party had intended to remain—or, whatever of attraction the crowd might yet retain was to them of no avail.

As they were leaving the room, Lady Mandeville entered. She glanced round, and said to Lorraine—“Considering, gentlemen, you had only yourselves to study, it must be owned you have shewn no indiscreet carelessness to your own comfort and convenience.”

“We want something,” said Lorraine, “to console us for your absence.”

“Nay, nay—it is to shew us how well you can do without us,” replied Lady Mandeville. “I daily expect, in these times of reform and retrenchment, that a bill will be brought into the House for the suppression of the female sex, as an expensive and useless superfluity.”

CHAPTER XXIII.

“ A change came o’er the spirit of my dream.”

BYRON.

Now, though we do not believe much of the ancient *belle alliance* between Cupid and the Graces yet remains—though we do not believe that the milliner accelerates the match, and that the colour of a *capote* may be the colour of our fate, or the turn of a curl the turn of our fortune ; having a theory of our own, that such things come by chance, and go by destiny ; yet we can perfectly understand a young lady’s drapery being influenced by her feelings, and that Hope may cast her *couleur de rose* over the mirror—that study of the fair conqueror. Emily lingered and lingered for a longer time at the glass than either Mrs. Radcliffe or Mrs. Hannah More would have approved of,—one for the sake of romance, the other for that of morality.

It is still a disputed point among authors,

whether it be best or not to describe their heroine : I must own I lean to the descriptive myself ; I like to have the lady placed bodily before me—I like to know whether the eyes with whose tears I am to sympathise are of the true blue of patriotism, or of the deep black of poetry. I can call up the image more distinctly, when I know if her cheek is like

“ The lady lily, paler than the moon ; ”
or like

“ The red rose, fragrant with the breath of June.”

Judging of others by myself, and quoting the Spectator for my authority, let me, as some old author says, “ paint my ladie with words.”

Parted in the middle into two rich braids, the dark hair divided so as to do full justice to the oval of the face, and caught on its auburn wave the first shade of the crape hat, whose yellow was delicate as the earliest primrose—that faint soft yellow, so trying, yet so becoming ; a colour to be avoided equally by the bright and the sallow, making the bright seem coarse, and the sallow sickly—but exquisite on that clear pale skin where the rose visits, but dwells not, and the blush passes with the feelings it betrays.

Not one in a thousand knows how to put on a bonnet: they set it on one side like a disagreeable recollection; or bolt upright, as if they wanted to realise Shakespeare's worst of puns,—“and she, like France, was at war with her hair (heir).” No such very great degree of genius can be displayed in the rest of the toilette. The dress has been chosen—it fits you *à ravir*—it has simply to be put on with mathematical accuracy; but the bonnet is the triumph of taste,—you must exert your intellect,—your destiny is in your own hands.

Emily was successful: brought a little forward on the face, its shade was the coquetry of timidity; and the dark eyes were more piquant from the slight difficulty of meeting them. Her dress was the deepest Parma violet,—so beautiful a colour in itself,—so picturesque in its associations,—the crimson of war and the purple of royalty blended in one: it opened at the throat, whose whiteness was, if possible, softened by that most ærial of inventions, a blonde ruff: finish the costume with gloves, whose tint was of the same delicate hue as the hat; put the feet into slippers fit for Cinderella, if she had worn black satin instead of glass,—and you have an exact idea of the

figure which two glasses were now reflecting. An open window gave cause for a shiver — and that was excuse for the boa, too graceful for even June to banish. With a secret consciousness that she was dressed in the very colour which Lorraine had, a week before, said was his favourite, she ran down to the drawing-room, and, approaching a stand of flowers, paused for a moment on the choice of scarlet geraniums, heliotropes, lilies, &c. when Edward came from the other room.

“Nay, Miss Arundel, the blossoms before you are too sophisticated, — their life has been for a whole morning artificial: unwilling to delegate the choice, I drove this morning to Colville’s, — allow me to offer you my selection;” and he gave her two of the freshest of moss-rosebuds, — those very loveliest of infant flowers.

Lorraine might have been struck with the deepness of her blush, — he only noticed the beauty of it.

“Do you know,” said he, laughingly, “if you blush your thanks so prettily, I must apply to you the compliment paid the Italian poet,

‘Tutti sei pensieri sono de’ rose.’”

Lady Alicia now came in, and, while waiting

for Mr. Delawarr, they could not do less than admire each other. People are often very generous in giving what is of no value : is it on this principle that one lady is usually so profuse in her admiration of the dress of another? Truly, that afternoon they ought to have enjoyed themselves : it was a bright, becoming day, — one of those fairy gifts with which summer now and then surprises us. Their progress had all the exhilaration of rapidity : four horses with

“ Bit of foam, and hoof of speed ; ”

and a carriage, light as if meant more for air than earth, combine the opposite pleasures of indolence and motion. Nothing could be gayer than the scene through which they passed : it had only one fault—they were used to it.

Soon the sound of music, and an atmosphere heavy with the odour of the most aromatic plants, announced their arrival at Lady Walsingham's villa, where Ambition was giving a *fête* to Pleasure, as Fashion's prime minister.

Lady Walsingham was rich — even in London ; she had rank, but she had not always had it. Her first husband was a horror, but he had money ; her second was a fool, but he had a title ; — and thus possessed of riches and rank,

she only wanted fashion. The *ré-union* to-day was political as that of the Field of the Cloth of Gold; splendour was at once to conciliate and to dazzle; not an orange-tree but had a purpose,—not an acacia but was charged, not only with its flowers, but “with Ulysses’ fate.” Notoriety is born of novelty; and exertion and imagination were alike exhausted to give character to the *fête*. Grecian temples were surrounded by hawthorn hedges,—Turkish tents stood in the shade of the oaks,—and one Chinese pagoda was dexterously entwined with honeysuckle; there were conservatories filled with the rarest plants, and avenues with ladies walking about as if in a picture; ices were served in the grotto; and servants in the Oriental costume handed almond-cakes.

On the turf-sweep before the house—her head heavy with feathers, her ears with diamonds, and her heart with anxiety—stood the hostess. Every nation has its characteristic—and an Englishwoman’s is standing, distributing her smiles, as if, as some one has observed, she had bought them, like her rouge, wholesale.

“This do I for your applause, O Athenians!” Thus did the conqueror of the world apostrophise the inhabitants of a city, who, if they

took any thought about his drowning, would rather have preferred it. And thus did that hope of to-morrow — which, why it should be glory in one case, and folly in another, I never could properly understand — support the Countess.

“ Very pretty indeed,” ejaculated Mr. St. John ; “ quite in character, — just like a scene in a play.”

“ Take me away,” lisped the pretty and *mignonne* Mrs. De Grey, “ lest I grow like what I do look upon, — I feel the reflection of her ladyship’s full pink upon my own face !”

“ All of luxury except its refinement,” was the encomium of Lord Alfred Vernon.

“ *C’est que Madame a été, comme Cicerone, consulter l’oracle, qui lui a dit de suivre la nature, et elle l’a suivie, son naturel,*” whispered the young Comte de Merivale, who brought to England little besides a contempt for it.

Emily, however, had not this morning one critical qualification ; no discontent for a commencement — no jarring interest for a continuation ; she looked on her roses, and their perfume seemed to have a power like the white ones of Alnaschar, to charm away all suffering ; she was leaning on Lorraine’s arm — and who shall

deny the intense happiness of the mere presence of one we love?—not those who have felt it.

“ So,” said Mr. St. John, “ after canvassing enough for two counties—a correspondence worthy of the days of Richardson—our Countess has prevailed on Lady Lauriston to allow the beauty to grace her *fête*.”

“ What!” exclaimed Edward; “ Lady Adelaide here?”

“ Yes; in the very next walk,—I have just paid my homage.”

“ Old friends of mine,—shall we go and speak?”—and Lorraine turned towards the next walk with an earnestness which made Emily bow, not speak, her assent.

They soon reached the trellice-work of roses beneath whose arch Adelaide and her brother were standing. A face of the most surpassing beauty lighted into smiles as Lorraine approached,—a few inquiries were made,—they moved on together,—the walk became narrower,—and in five minutes more, Emily found herself transferred to Lord Merton’s care, and Lady Adelaide and Lorraine following. She had not even the satisfaction of watching her companions. Engrossed in their own conversation,

they lingered behind,—a gay laugh at first gave sign of their presence, but that soon subsided to a low whisper, which implies such interest in discourse:—

“ Speak low, if you speak love.”

Once she turned back;—Edward’s eyes were fixed with most eloquent earnestness on the exquisite face of his companion,—the rich colour of excitement had banished his usual paleness. Emily felt it almost a relief to look towards Adelaide; but the expression was not

“ The soft betraying air
That women loved and flattered love to wear :”

there was consciousness, but it was that of beauty—and brilliancy, but it was that of triumph.

In the meantime, Emily was *progressing* most rapidly in Lord Merton’s favour. He had not always been the eldest son—a steeple chase had put one brother out of the way, and a duel another. He was shy from habit, and talkative from nature: the last quality made him wish for a listener, and the first to be obliged to one. Talking uninterruptedly was a luxury he had not yet enjoyed enough

for indifference. Abroad, he had hitherto been one of those juveniles to whom no calculation forbids contradiction, and no interest necessitates attention. At home, his mother never ceased talking, neither did his sisters; and silence in a woman had become to him her perfection. For above an hour, with a feeling of most enviable content, he had been detailing to Emily how his beautiful chestnut mare, Zephyr, had caught, suffered from, and been cured of her last cold. At first he expected to be interrupted—then looked to see if she yawned—but neither of these conversational contingencies occurring, and Emily giving a proper quantity of acquiescing bows, he yielded himself up to the full enjoyment of so delightful a companion.

In one part of the grounds were stationed some jugglers—these suggested a full account of how, when he was at college, he had taken some lessons of one, till he was nearly as expert in catching the balls as his master. The Prague minstrels, stationed in a young plantation of firs, gave another occasion of discourse, how he had once attempted the French horn himself, but found his lungs too delicate—how his mother had been afraid of a consumption.

Many a passer-by thought Miss Arundel was listening to some subject of most touching interest: his Lordship was only detailing the benefit he derived one wet day from his caoutchouc cloak. The truth is, Lord Merton was, simply, naturally and intensely selfish; he was himself "the ocean of his thoughts;" he never considered the comfort of other people, because he never looked at it as distinct from his own; and the most romantic devotion, the most self-denying love, would have seemed, if he were the object of it, as quite in the common course of things.

This is a common character, which age alone develops into deformity. Youth, like charity, covers a multitude of sins; but Heaven help the wife, children, servants, and all other pieces of domestic property, when such a man is fifty, and has the gout!

It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good—and Lady Walsingham was made happy by the sincerity and warmth with which Lord Merton assured her he was delighted with her entertainment, and especially charmed with the jugglers and minstrels.

Emily now pleaded fatigue, and seeing Lady Alicia seated on a most rural-looking bench,

with an awning of blue silk, she took a place beside her: but Lord Merton was too well pleased with his companion to part; and, somewhat unceremoniously appropriating a shawl which hung near, spreading it, lest the grass should be damp, he seated himself at their feet—a plan which succeeded beyond his expectations, for he thus secured two listeners. Emily assumed an air of attention, but her thoughts were far away. She looked on the flowers which Lorraine had given her a few hours since—they were drooping already; and was this the day from which she had expected so much pleasure? What a stupid thing a *fête* was! What a waste of time and expense! So much bad taste too! Lucky is it for a hostess her verdict does not depend on young ladies, unless she could call a parliament of love, and arrange all its little affairs in her own favour. And yet all this was not so much discontent as disguise. Who does not shrink from love's first avowal? and how much so, when that avowal is to be made in secret, in silence, and in vain? Her temples beat with that acute pain which makes every sound a torture; her sight was as confused as her thoughts; and she breathed with difficulty: to speak almost choked her.

She thought not of weeping; yet a world of tears was now at her heart.

"Oh, join us!" said Lady Mandeville, as a flourish of trumpets announced that the refreshment-room was thrown open.

Adelaide and Lorraine came up at the same moment; Lord Merton sprang from his seat with all the agility of expectation; and in a few moments they were seated at one of the tables, in a tent whose scarlet and gold were worthy of Tippoo Saib, and whose size emulated that given by the fairy to her princely lover. How mistaken is the phrase, "every delicacy of the season"—they mean out of season: Grapes are ripe at the same time as strawberries, and peaches come in with the crocuses. A breakfast *à la fourchette* is the "chartered libertine" of gastronomy—one eats ice, another soup, and a *pâté à la financier* rivals its neighbour pineapple.

"What with their tents, turbans, coffee, and fountains, all signs *du meilleur goût*, I think the Turks a most refined people," said Lady Mandeville. "If it ever be my sorrowful destiny to enact the Ephesian, I shall set off for Constantinople—try the effect of *mes beaux*

yeux on the Sublime Porte, and make a futurity of cachemeres and rose-water."

"Ah!" exclaimed Lorraine, "the Turks know how to manage you ladies—

'There rolls the sea, and yonder yawns the sack.'

"Is that your idea of gallantry?" said Mr. Delawarr.

"It is its excess, I grant," interrupted Lorraine; "but I must say, I think the Turk invests his homage to woman with that mystery, that solitude, that setting apart from life's daily and common use, which constitutes so much of poetry. His beautiful Circassian or Georgian mistress is a thing too sacred for common eyes. I quite enter into the feeling which shuns a profane eye resting on the face we love. What a charm must be in the veil our hand only is privileged to raise! His wealth, his taste, are lavished on his haram. He makes the shrine worthy of the idol. Her delicate step falls on the velvet carpet—her sweet mouth inhales an atmosphere of perfume—the chain of pearls, the fragrant attar, the crimson ruby, are heaped on the fair favourite, who wears them only for him. Liberality is an imposing term for indif-

ference. We guard the treasure we value; and I should expect my jealousy to be taken as a proof of my devotion."

"Then," said Lady Mandeville, "you intend making love with a bunch of keys in one hand, and a dagger in the other."

"Alas! I live in an age when Bedlam is considered fitting temple of romance. I must content myself with an abstract admiration of Turkish seclusion."

"Romance! All nonsense," said Lord Merton, reaching across Emily for another slice of pine.

"On the contrary," replied Lorraine, "I think romance can never take a very high tone but in times of great civilisation. Romance is more matter of feeling than of passion; and if violent passions belong to a barbarous, strong feelings belong to a civilised state. Exemption from great bodily exertion is favourable to habits of thought. The refinement of our tastes, of course, is communicated to our sentiments; and we exaggerate, subtilise, and spiritualise—the three chief ingredients of romance."

"I believe," said Lady Mandeville, "that we abuse the age we live in, on the same principle that we take liberties with our friends."

The poor present time, how it is calumniated! degenerate, immoral, irreligious, are its best epithets; and we talk of the good old time till we really believe it existed."

"Even," observed Mr. Delawarr, "as we eulogise the peace and innocence of a country life; for the peace of the parish, apply to the rector on the tithe day—for its innocence, to the justice of the peace."

"But do you not think," asked Lorraine, "that these ideal excellencies have their origin in our nature's better part? The first step either to goodness or happiness is to believe in their existence."

"We shall lose the fireworks if we sit talking here," said Lord Merton.

Even Lady Alicia was startled out of her passiveness by this announcement; and the whole party hurried towards the piece of water, by whose side the exhibition was to take place. Lord Merton still kept his place at Emily's side, and narrated to her divers of his juvenile feats with gunpowder; and he was one, as we have said, to whom not talking was listening.

It was a magnificent display of the most magnificent of elements: the rocket swept through the air like a spirit, and the skies seemed to

realise the old saying, and rained gold and silver; while the water below spread like an immense mirror, till above and below gleamed with light. But Emily's eyes wandered from the scene before her; and every fugitive glance only brought back fresh conviction of Edward's interest in the beautiful face whose smiles were exclusively enough given to himself, to have made one far less perfect very fascinating.

Adelaide was too quick-sighted not to perceive that Miss Arundel, when she first saw her talking to Lorraine, wore a very different air from Miss Arundel listening to Merton; and a rival was the *sauce Robert*, which would have made her not eat, but flirt with her grandfather.

However, there is always one solace to misery, as there is one drawback to pleasure,—they must all have an end, and so had Lady Walsingham's *fête*. The carriage drove off, but the place opposite Emily was vacant; Lorraine had accepted a seat in Lord Merton's cabriolet. Miss Arundel was not the only listener, for which her brother was that day indebted to Adelaide.

CHAPTER XXIV.

“ It is a fearful thing
To love as I love thee ; to feel the world,
The beautiful, the bright, joy-giving world,
A blank without thee. * * *
He is the star, round which my thoughts revolve
Like satellites. My father ! can it be,
That thine, the unceasing love of many years,
Doth not so fill my heart as this strange guest ? ”

The Ancestress.

WHAT an odd thing experience is !—now turning over so rapidly the book of life, now writing so much on a single leaf. We hear of the head turning grey in a single night,—the same change passes over the heart. Affection is the tyrant of a woman, and only bids her to the banquet to suspend a cutting sword over her head, which a word, a look may call down to inflict the wound that strikes to the death, or heals, but with a scar. Could we fling back the veil which nature and society alike draw over her feelings, how much of sorrow—unsuspected because unexpressed—would be found !

—how many a young and beating heart would show disappointment graven on the inmost core!—what a history of vain hopes, gentle endeavours, anxieties, and mortifications, laid bare! There is one phrase continually occurring in conversation,—“O, a woman never marries the man to whom she was first attached.” How often—how lightly is this said!—how little thought given to the world of suffering it involves! Checked by circumstance—abandoned from necessity, the early attachment may depart with the early enthusiasm which youth brings, but leaves not; still the dream was sweet, and its waking bitter. But Emily was not one to whom such vision would be

“Sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a moment.”

Nature had given her the keenest sensibility; and the solitude in which much of her life had hitherto been passed had left free scope for the imagination to spiritualise and exalt. Living entirely with her uncle and aunt, she had insensibly caught the quiet manners of these, much advanced in life,—the young are great imitators. Unaccustomed to witness strong bursts of feeling, she never thought of giving

outwardly way to her own; thus, hers, unrelieved and unexhausted by display, grew stronger from concealment. She had mixed little with those of her own age,—hence she was reserved; and the confidante and the confession weaken love, by mixing up with it somewhat of vanity, and taking from its mystery. Emily's idea of love was of the most romantic and exalted kind. Whether borrowed from the *Duchess of Cleves*, and the other old novels with which the library abound, where love is a species of idolatry; or from the pages of modern poetry, where all that is spiritual and beautiful is thrown around its nature;—all made love to her a species of religion.

She had arrived in London with no very accurate notion of what she had to expect; but it was to be something very delightful. Accustomed to be made much of—aware of her own pretensions, she had come prepared for entertainment and homage; but she had found neither;—and though rich, pretty, and high-born, she was at nineteen very near being philosophical, and pronouncing the pleasures of the world to be vanity and vexation of spirit.

Lorraine's arrival had changed all this. At a glance he saw how weary a time the young

friend of his sister must be passing; and mere good nature only would have prompted his attention to the stranger — to say nothing of that stranger being an elegant and interesting girl.

Emily now had a partner, who decided the fact of her fairy-like dancing—whose authority was sufficient for admiration—whose attention settled the worthiness of the object on which it was bestowed: she owed him much more than himself. Again, the mornings passed away so pleasantly, when there was some one to whom she could talk about last night; and it was much more agreeable to sing to Edward than to herself. He loved music; he liked the grace, the wit of female society; he was very handsome; and there was nothing improbable in supposing he had a heart to lose, and, moreover, he might lose it. Not that Emily had given one thought to such chance,—Love is the least calculating of all dreamers,—she had been very happy, and such shrink intuitively from asking why. Mortification had forced the conviction upon her; and who ever saw the one they love devoted to another, and found not the fatal truth written on their heart,—and for ever? Many and bitter were the tears Emily shed that night over two withered roses: she

wept for vain hopes, for regret, but for shame more than all. Shame is the worst pang of unrequited affection. Heavens! to be forced to ask ourselves what right we had to love.

One of our most celebrated authors (a lady, by the question,) once asked, how is it that women in the utmost depths of grief never forget to curl their hair?—Vanity was the cause assigned; but I say, shame. We shrink from shewing outward sign of sorrow, if that sorrow be in aught connected with the feelings; and the reason of this must be sought in some theory of innate ideas not yet discovered.

Emily the next morning appeared with the usual grape-like curls, and her cheek no paler than fatigue might authorise,

“ ‘ Ah, the day of my destiny’s over, ’ ”

said Lorraine; “ and, a fair exchange being no robbery, I quote the next line a little varied,

‘ The star of my fate is on high. ’

Listen to the importance of yesterday:—‘ Yesterday Lady Walsingham’s splendid villa was thrown open to the fashionable world, which crowded to enjoy all that taste could invent, or luxury supply,—breakfast was laid for two hun-

dred.' There lies the spell ; pines and champagne who can resist, — even though through the medium of Lady Walsingham ? How tired, how fat her poor ladyship looked ! like Mont Blanc, she was covered with the crimson of evening."

"Nay, now, Edward," said Mr. Delawarr, "you were there yourself."

"Yes ; and am I not just acting up to our great social principle—go first, and grumble afterwards ? Besides, the *fête* was given not to pleasure, but to pretension—and pretension is a sort of general election, depending on universal suffrage, and subject to canvassing and criticism. Born a milkmaid, meant for a farmer's wife, why are Lady Walsingham's nature and fate at variance ? Those red arms should have been celebrated for their skill in bacon, and her cheeses noted the country round. How comfortable she would have looked in her crimson shawl—how respectable in her flowered print ! What can she have to do with French kid ?—her gloves are her martyrs. That countenance shining through blonde—those elephantine ears, whose girandole of diamonds is the size of a chandelier in half the drawing-rooms of genteel residences for small families

or a single gentleman — what part can she have in the airy empire of caprice, the Parthian-arrow-guarded world of fashion? Why does not she live in the country, roast whole oxen on her wedding-day, keep open house at an election, shake her acquaintance heartily by the hand, and drive in a coach-and-four with outriders every Sunday to church? Her idea of taste (the ocean whence Fashion springs) is like the pupil's idea of Helen, to whom Apelles said, 'Not being able to make her beautiful, you have made her splendid.'

"Strange," said Mr. Delawarr, "the influence of opinion! We know people to be fools — individually we should disdain their judgment; yet, taken in a mass, no sacrifice seems too great to secure their suffrage. The desire of notoriety, and the love of fame, differ but little; yet one is the meanest, the other the noblest feeling in our nature: the one looks to the present, and is a mixture of the selfish and the common-place — the other dwells upon the future, and is the generous and the exalted."

"Lady Walsingham's is a very beautiful place," observed Emily, from the mere desire of saying something. It is curious, that when we feel in ourselves the most inclined to silence,

we almost always fancy it is absolutely necessary we should talk.

“It is indeed,” replied Lorraine; “I know no places that so realise my ideas of luxury as these villas—so near our crowded, hot, dusty, noisy metropolis; yet so green, so cool, so quiet, and so filled with flowers. I dislike Richmond itself exceedingly; just a place to visit on Sunday—with its hill covered with people, evidently labouring, not against its height, but their own good dinner. The curse of the steam-boat is upon the lovely river; but some of the villas, imbedded in their own old trees—surrounded by turf the fairy queen might tread—girdled with every variety of flowery shrub—I do not quite say I could spend the whole day there, but I could have a luxurious breakfast—one ought to indulge in natural tastes of a morning. Alas! with what regret do I see the brick-dust generation in which we live, so prolific in squares, crescents, places, rows, streets,—tall, stiff houses, with red curtains and white blinds! If this city system of colonisation goes on, our children will advertise a green tree, like an elephant, as ‘this most wonderful production of nature;’ and the meaning of green

grass will only be to be found in the dictionary."

"What a valuable art will landscape painting be in those days! A view from nature will, both for beauty and rarity, be the *chef-d'œuvre* of an artist."

"I must own, landscapes are not my favourite style of art: it is the feeling, more than the seeing, of the country in which I delight; the warm, soft air—the many musical noises—the wandering through the lights and shadows of the thick trees, rather than looking on any given point of view."

"I do agree with you—I hate a fine prospect by profession—one that you are expected to admire, and say fine things about; but in landscapes I like and dislike what I do in Wordsworth's poetry: I admire its mountain range of distant hill and troubled sky—or the lonely spot of inland shade, linked with human thought and human interest; but I detest its small pieces of rurality, its sheep and its cows. In painting, as in poetry, I like to be somewhat carried out of my every-day existence. For example, I give my utmost praise—or, I should rather say, my homage—to the Ode on Immortality, Tintern Abbey, &c.; but my taste revolts from Goody

Blake and Harry Gill. Now, Hofland's pictures are great favourites of mine: there is not only the lovely scene—the moon reflected in her softest mirror, the wave—but something or other that calls up the poetry of memory in the gazer; the battlements of some old castle, whose only banner is now of ivy—or a fallen temple, whose divinity has departed, but whose beauty remains, and whose 'fine electric chain' is one of a thousand associations."

"While on the subject of pictures, I heard the other day—we cannot vouch, as the newspapers say, for the truth of the report—that Lady Walsingham has had her picture and her husband's taken in a style at once allegorical and domestic. His lordship is holding a cage of doves, to which she is throwing roses: I understand her ladyship particularly requested the cage might be richly gilt."

"As it is the great principle of political economy to tax luxuries, why are not reports taxed? Are they not the chief luxuries of society? Of all my senses, I thank Heaven that of hearing is limited: the dative case is very well—hearing what is said *to* me; but preserve me from the ablative case—hearing what is said *about* me."

"Would Lady Walsingham enjoy hearing to-day what is said of her *fête* yesterday?"

"Ah!" exclaimed Emily, "how unkind—how unjust this is!"

"You remember the old proverb, 'a fair exchange is no robbery'—or the anecdote of Piron, who said that the only speeches necessary on admission to the French Academy were for the received to say, '*Grand merci, messieurs*;' and for the receivers to reply, '*Il n'y a pas de quoi*.' Most hosts and guests might exchange these courtesies; and the '*Grand merci*' of vanity might be answered by the '*Il n'y a pas de quoi*' of ostentation. We speak ill of our neighbours, not from ill-nature, but idleness; satire is only the cayenne of conversation: people have so few subjects for talking about in common with their friends but their friends—and it is utterly impossible to dress them as Fontenelle did his asparagus, *toute en huile*."

"One reason why Mr. Heathcote who dines here to-day is called so entertaining, is, that, like the conquerors of old, he gives no quarter."

"I regret my absence," said Lorraine; "but I have promised to go and congratulate Lady Lauriston on her leaving the oaks of her park

for the acacias of her villa. Still I lament Mr. Heathcote: he knows all the world, and has an anecdote for and an epigram upon every body. He kills with diamond arrows: his voice is so low, his smile so bland, his whole manner so gentle, that you are barely aware of the concentrated acid and bitter of his speech. I call him cream of tartar. I am sure you will be so much amused."

Emily felt no such certainty—she felt as if she could never be amused again. She wandered into the drawing-room alone: she tried her harp—it was out of tune; her new songs—they were not pretty; she took up a new novel—it was so dull! She went into the front room—it was too sunny; into the back—it was too dark. The sound of Lorraine's cabriolet attracted her to the window; the fear of being seen kept her away. At length it drove off; she held her breath to listen to its latest sound: another nearer carriage drowned the roll of the distant wheels, and she felt as if even this small pleasure were denied. Strange, how any strong feeling refers all things to itself!—we exalt by dint of exaggeration. Not a creature was in the spacious and beautiful rooms: she almost started to see some four or five whole-

length reflections of herself: the solitude made them painful; and, catching up a book, she threw herself into an arm-chair, which, at least, had the advantage of being far from any glass.

There is a certain satisfaction in the appearance of employment, and Emily opened her book; but she could not read—her thoughts were far away. Mortification had added diverse prose notes to the poetry of the last few weeks. Her first impulse was to deny her feelings even to herself—her second to laugh bitterly at such vain deceit. Then she recalled words, looks, whose softness had misled;—alas! a slight investigation served to shew how much their colouring had been given by herself; and, as a last resource, she began to magnify the merit of Edward Lorraine.

Our being attached to a hero almost makes a heroine; and excellence is an excellent excuse for admiration. Yes, he was worthy of devotion, such as the heart pays, and once only, to the idol it has itself set up; but it was to be deep, silent, and unsuspected. And Adelaide—she would love her! How kind, how true, were the next moment's wishes for their happiness!

What a pity it is that our most pure and most beautiful feelings should spring from false

impressions! What generous self-sacrifice—what a world of gentle affection, were now called forth in Emily by a moment's phantasy, whose life depended on that frailest of frail things, a coquette's vanity!

How untrue, to say youth is the happiest season of our life: it is filled with vexations, for almost all its ideas are false ones; they must be set right—and often how harshly! Its hopes are actual beliefs: how often must they be taught doubt by disappointment! And then its keen feelings, laying themselves so bare to the beak of the vulture experience! Youth is a season that has no repose.

They spent the next fortnight at Richmond—and a very miserable fortnight it was; for Lady Lauriston's villa was at Twickenham, and whether on the river or the road, the arrangement was always the same—Adelaide was the care of Lorraine. Emily soon found her fancy for cultivating the friendship of her fair rival was a fancy indeed. Lady Adelaide had been brought up in a proper sense of the danger of confidence: young friends, as her mother used to observe, are either useless or mischievous; and Adelaide duly considered her young friends as non-entities or rivals.

If, however, the sister was as cold as politeness, the brother was being animated very rapidly into something like warmth. Now an only son, it was his duty to marry: moreover, he thought a married man more comfortable than a single one: many little liberties were taken with a single, never taken with a married man: it was purchasing an exemption from young ladies at once. Finally, he thought Emily was in love with him: she always took his arm in walking, and they were sure to sit by each other at dinner. He forgot Emily had no choice. Pre-occupied and absent, Lord Merton never came into Emily's head: excepting their intervisiting, both families were living rather retired,—so there was no third person to say, "Ah, what a conquest you have made!" This phrase, which so often opens the eyes to what does not exist, gave here no intimation of actual mischief.

Yet our four lovers were all on the brink of discord. Lorraine was beginning to think his divinity not quite so divine—delays are dangerous—and neither his vanity nor his sentiment was satisfied at the little progress he had made. Adelaide was tiring of flirtation, which had only held so long a reign from the

death of a relation having forced them into most unwilling retirement. It was very tiresome of aunts to die, if they were to be considered relations.

The second season thus broken up, Lady Lauriston was daily impressing on her beauty's mind the necessity of a "further-looking hope" and an establishment. Emily was sad, weary, and seemed ill: all said late hours were too much for her—a good sign, thought her calculating lover, in a wife; and every morning, between the paragraphs of the *Morning Herald*, Lord Merton weighed the advantages and disadvantages of wedded life.

Miss Arundel had never been properly brought out as an heiress; and amazing animation was added to the attachment, when, one evening, Lady Lauriston detailed to her dear Alfred much excellent advice, and the information that Emily was her uncle's adopted child, and, as such, certain of a noble fortune,—to say nothing of hopes from her aunt, whose property her indefatigable ladyship had ascertained was at her own disposal.

The next morning, her for once very obedient son rode back with Lorraine. Want of something else to say, and a very shady lane,

disposed him to confidence ; and he forthwith began a panegyric on himself, and on the good fortune of Miss Arundel, stating, he was now on his road to offer himself and his debts to her acceptance. Lorraine was surprised. I have heard it said, that no man ever believes a woman can fall in love with his friend : I would add, she certainly falls marvellously in his opinion if she does—and Edward's first thoughts were of Lord Merton's divers imperfections. Never had he seemed more selfish or more silly : “ but, to be sure, the fool has a title ; ” and he amused himself with recalling all the usual common-places on the vanity and ambition of woman, while Merton poured into his ear the whole stream of his self-satisfaction.

They arrived : one said he should prolong his ride for an hour or two—the other went into the drawing-room. Emily was seated in a window ; but there was room for two, and her unsuspected lover took his place. Mechanically she shut the book, assumed an attitude of attention, and prepared a few yeses. Lord Merton began by mentioning the good qualities he required in a wife, and thence took occasion to apply them all to Emily ; but his introduction had been so long, that she, who knew no

earthly reason why she should be interested in the various excellences of the future Lady Merton, allowed her thoughts to wander, and was only roused from her reverie by her hand being taken—a little rapture being deemed necessary at her consent—so her silence had been interpreted—and kissed with as much devotedness as Merton could shew any one but himself. Surprised and angry, she rose from her seat, and exclaimed, “I really do not understand”—a sentence Lord Merton did not give her time to finish; for, ascribing her retreat to embarrassment, he was most desirous of sustaining her under the weight of obligation, lest her gratitude should be quite fatiguing. Slowly the conviction broke upon him that she had not heard what he had been saying.

“Am I to understand, madam, that you have not listened to what I was mentioning?”

Now really sorry and confused, Emily pleaded headach,—said she could not account for her absence of mind,—made a thousand excuses,—entreated him to mention what he had been saying again, a glimmering idea having crossed her mind of a charity fair, about which he had been affecting much interest; and referring his thanks to his supposing she had pro-

mised her assistance, and with floating visions of guitars, butterflies, and boots made into pin-cushions, new-prepared to listen in good earnest.

With the concentrated anger of fourteen patriots at a list of sinecures in which they have no part, or a dozen professors who find they cannot get pupils — nor fees without, Lord Merton steadied his voice, almost inarticulate from rage, sufficiently to answer, —

“ Yes, Miss Arundel, I will repeat; but, remember, repetition is not renewal. I offered you the title of Lady Merton, — I am sorry for you, — good morning;” and Lord Merton left the room, thoroughly convinced of Emily’s vain regrets, and with quite an elation of spirit from thinking his dignity had been properly supported, and the offender punished by his not repeating the offer.

Emily sat in the window, sometimes pondering on objects without, and then on those within, when Lorraine’s entrance interrupted a very profound meditation on the strange contrarieties of love affairs in this world.

“ Has Merton been here this morning ?”

Emily’s blush seemed sufficient answer; and Lorraine began a laughing succession of questions, congratulations, &c.

Now this was really too bad,—for him to suppose she could think of another, and to take her acceptance as a matter of course,—and such another, too, as Lord Merton: mortification lent a helping hand to vexation.

Lorraine was Merton's friend. Pray, was it that which gave such pleasant piquancy to Emily's bitter and contemptuous denial of all wish for Merton's hand or heart? Certainly he had not remembered till then, what a pity that such a sweet creature should be so utterly thrown away. The human heart is like Pandora's box—only it is hatred, not hope, that lies curled up at the bottom. It is well we are little in the habit of analysing our common and passing sensations,—we should be horror-struck at our own quantity of hate.

The next day brought a letter from Mr. Arundel,—for the first time he urged his niece's return.

"I miss," said the letter, "your light step, and your dear smile, more and more every hour. You have many days of life before you,—I but a few. I can spare you no longer, dearest Emily. You are not happy,—none of your letters breathe the buoyant spirit of your age.

The last of a house whose branches have dropt off one by one,—whose records are filled with those who died in their youth,—child of a brother in whom I once cherished all the active hopes I never indulged for myself, judge how precious you are in my sight. I must have you in my own care again,—I must have my child home.”

Long and bitterly did Emily weep over this letter,—she started with horror from herself. Was it possible that she could feel the faintest wish for delay? She recalled the many happy hours she had passed among the old trees, or reading aloud to her uncle some book whose delight was too great to keep to herself,—she thought of favourite walks; but in the midst of all these recollections she found herself holding her breath to catch a distant sound of Lorraine’s step, or a tone of his voice; and her heart sank cold and dead, when she remembered that in a few days she should listen for them in vain. It was with a feeling of atonement she hurried her preparations; and yet when the morning of departure came, it seemed scarcely possible it could have come so soon.

No time passes so rapidly as that of painful

expectancy,—no hour arrives so soon as the one we dread. It was a morning of July rain—the dreariest of any, perhaps from contrast; we look for sunshine in summer—or because it washes away so many sweet flowers and bright leaves. Who, for example, can watch a tree covered with roses blown into full beauty, and not regret, even to pain, the ravage of a heavy shower on its branches—the growth of its year scattered and destroyed in a morning? But every rose in the garden might have been destroyed before Emily had pitied them;—the eyes that are filled with tears look inwards. Physical miseries greatly add to the discomfort of mental ones. Madame de Genlis represents one of her lovers as deploring the loss of his mistress and his feather-bed in a breath; and certainly early rising increases the pang of separation,—the raw, damp air, the headaching feel of lingering drowsiness, the cold coffee, the hurry of sleepy servants: the science of human happiness—and all is science now-a-days—is greatly in arrear, or we should fix the middle of the day for farewells. Regrets, hopes, good wishes, &c. mingled together,—all regretted her departure. Mr. Delawarr handed her to the

carriage; she leant forward, and caught Lorraine's parting bow; the iron gate swung to loudly and heavily,—like that of Dante, it shut on hope.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

LONDON:

J. MOYES, CASTLE STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.





